



# The Creative Woman



WOMEN OF CHINA

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The Creative Woman is published three times a year by Governors State University. We focus on a special topic in each issue, presented from a feminist perspective. We celebrate the creative achievements of women in many fields and appeal to inquiring minds. We publish fiction, poetry, book reviews, articles, photography and original graphics.

Cover photograph of Zheng Xiaoying



In a season when *Time* names Deng Xiaoping Man of the Year, one can hardly open a magazine or newspaper without reading some new views on the changes going on in China today as that ancient nation of more than a billion human beings hurries toward the "four modernizations."

We think our readers are in for a treat they won't easily find elsewhere. By special arrangement between *The Creative Woman* and *Women of China* we present a special section profiling the lives of ten modern professional Chinese women. Here you will read their own stories written in their own words, edited by the Editorial Board of *Women of China*, an English language monthly periodical published in Beijing. These profiles help the perceptive reader to better understand the achievements of Chinese women, their difficulties, and unresolved problems. The liberation of women in China, as elsewhere in the world, is far from complete. This section constitutes the central half of this issue and can be found on pages 15 through 34.

Dorothea Beard, professor of art history at Western Illinois University, recently visited China and here reports on her particular interest, post-Mao women painters. Gong Shu, painter, art therapist and student of psychology, literature and oriental philosophy, gives us her insights into "creative relating," integrating Western and Eastern concepts. Dr. Ho, control engineering department chair at Shanghai University of Technology, has given us his appreciative recital of his wife's achievements in music and Dr. Chen, researcher in Nutrition and Biochemistry at Beijing Medical University, has described how she developed her specialty in sports medicine. An annotated bibliography by Catherine Olson and another of Carolyn Carmichael's penetrating book reviews complete this special issue on Women of China.



## CHINESE WOMEN ARTISTS: THE NEWEST FLOWERS TO BLOOM IN CHINA'S LIBERALIZED GARDEN OF ART

by Dorathea Beard

An exhibition entitled "Contemporary Chinese Painting: An Exhibition from the People's Republic of China" (organized by Lucy Lim, executive director and curator of the Chinese Cultural Center of San Francisco), which has been touring the United States since 1983, provides Americans with an unprecedented opportunity to assess the results of lifting the restraints that weighed so heavily on Chinese artists and intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).<sup>1</sup> Now, as the artists themselves delight in informing us, there is encouragement to "let a hundred different flowers bloom."<sup>2</sup> That there is indeed a new flowering of creative achievement in the wake of the cessation of artistic repression is especially evident in the work of the women artists included in this exhibition of paintings done in the traditional techniques of ink and color on paper.<sup>3</sup>

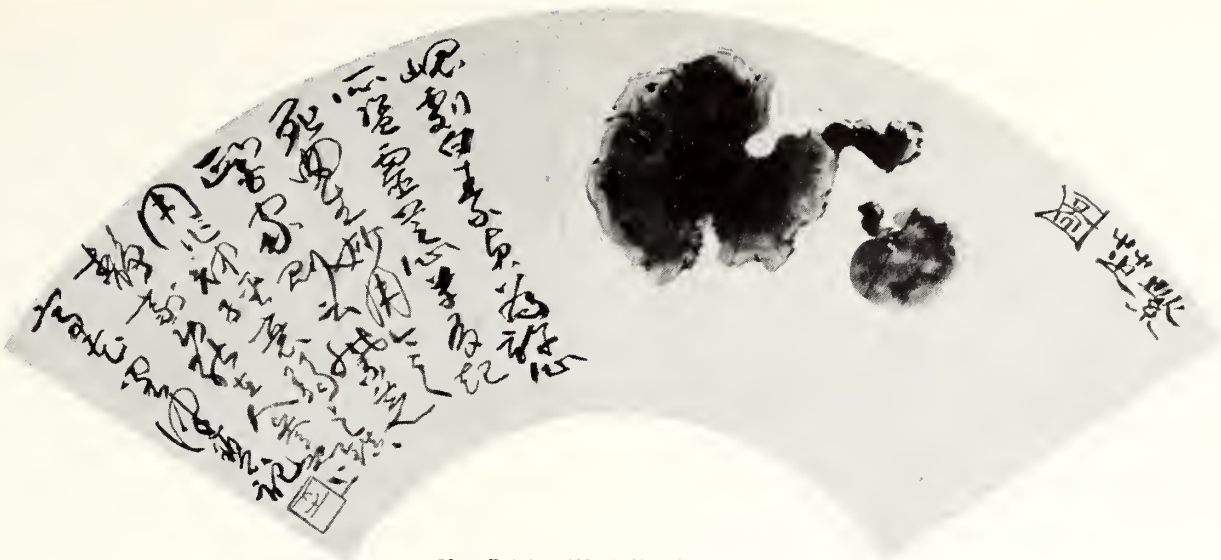
When referring to the men, one speaks of a cultural renaissance; for the women, it is more of a birth than a rebirth. Of course Chinese women, like women everywhere, have always created. But what did they create? What was their status? Tseng Yu-Ho Ecke, herself a strong painter of traditional brush and ink Chinese landscapes, says in her catalogue of *Chinese Folk Art in American Collections* that, until recently, even women in wealthy urban homes were automatically taught all the varied skills connected with fabric,<sup>4</sup> and one is justified in assuming that much of the strong folk craft tradition depended on women. Some of the most attractive examples in the folk art catalogue are the colorful, often whimsical padded applique objects designed for young children, such as bibs, animal-face slippers, and tiger caps. Now that Chinese peasants have been given official blessing to descend on tourists like a horde of locusts with their homemade wares, such crafts are experiencing a great revival, and none more so than the applique work, which can be produced frugally from scraps of cotton. While they may not be as well made as formerly, these pieces are as bright and whimsical as ever and offer some scope for individuality. Many of today's pieces also are made for children (slippers with embroidered animal faces, padded sleeveless

vests, a cylindrical pillow with cats' heads at each end), but these enterprising women likewise have begun to produce tote bags in a big way, and no two of the dozens brought to my attention this past summer were exactly alike.

Sadly, the craft "factories" did not reveal the same vitality. Sexless they certainly were, with both men and women sharing the same tasks, but both techniques and designs seemed strictly conventional, with little possibility of individual initiative. Attached to these official craft studios, or to tourist hotels, one often finds so-called art galleries, but they were extremely disappointing. At none of them did I see work approaching the caliber of the paintings touring the United States. Most often, the paintings were merely repetitions of familiar styles and motifs, if not outright copies of famous works. (One should bear in mind that the idea of copying the masters is quite different in China than in the West. Far from considering this plagiarism, or the production of "fakes", the Chinese tradition of copying masterpieces is seen as a valid discipline and the height of respect and honor to the greats of the past.) At one hotel shop, where I saw displayed a view of local scenery that seemed different, further exploration revealed a whole stack of identical paintings (for the Chinese, they would still qualify as "original" because they were all painted by hand). For the traveller with the time to visit the once-more-flourishing art academies in the major cities, the situation, of course, would be different; but those are not included in regular tourist itineraries, and the frenetic pace of most China tours precludes seeking them out.

Therefore, we in the West may be all the more grateful for the sustained high level of quality in the current exhibition. This is not the first time that contemporary Chinese paintings have been exhibited in the West, but previous shows were often poorly received, due to the low or else uneven quality of the work—no doubt because the government made the selection. In this case, Lim made the selection, with the advice of two other Americans, the eminent scholars James Cahill and Michael Sullivan, and the enthusiastic cooperation of the Chinese artists themselves.<sup>5</sup>

This exhibition also provides the best evidence I have seen that the campaign to raise the status of women, so that they will indeed, in Mao's often repeated phrase, "hold up half the sky," is showing significant progress. One might assume that the presence of seven women painters in



**Chen Peiqiu** (1922- ), Shanghai woman artist.  
 "Purple Fungus", undated.  
 Fan painting, Chinese ink and color on paper.  
 25 x 53.5 cm. (9 3/4 x 21 inches)

the show is entirely due to Lim, but that is not strictly true, since several of them were brought to her attention by Cahill and Sullivan. And only Cahill's essay for the catalogue, of all the books and articles I have consulted, discusses their achievements specifically as pertaining to women.<sup>6</sup> In many books, in fact, women artists are not even specifically identified as women. Given Western unfamiliarity with Chinese names, one discovers the artist's sex only when the author happens to refer to "her" work. I doubt, however, that this treatment indicates that all gender bias has been eradicated, though one must glean hints of this from isolated statements.<sup>7</sup> One example would be the statement of a woman named Li Feng-lan, one of the famous peasant painters from Shansi province:

"It was no easy matter for a woman like me to take up creative art. I worked in the fields most of the year and had family duties at home. I could only paint in the little time I had for rest. Moreover, some conservative people looked askance at a village woman painting and made cold, sarcastic remarks. . ."<sup>8</sup>

Another, at the opposite end of the spectrum, would be the statement Ling Shu-Hua, who must be ranked with the elite, scholar-artist literati class, made to Chu-Tsing Li. Ling told him she had studied with a woman artist in Beijing named Ho Shu-yu, who "was quite proficient in her skill and technique, but she did not receive much recognition."<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, Li mentions that Tseng Yu-Ho, who now lives in Honolulu, had "enjoyed fame in Peking as an outstanding young woman painter in the strict traditional style," while still

in her teens.<sup>10</sup> And the fact that several of the women in the current exhibition (Xiao Shufang, born in 1911; Zhu, born in 1920; and Chen Peiqiu, born in 1922), as well as several women who have pursued careers abroad, received their artistic training in China before the People's Republic was established in 1949 shows that opportunities for women artists began under the aegis of the Republic of China (1911-1949) and probably owed most to the establishment of art academies in China, which almost literally coincided with the establishment of the Republic.

This group of older women tends to be rather conservative, in my estimation. All three are "flower and bird" painters, though Chen Peiqiu is also represented by a landscape painting. Perhaps this can be seen as a legacy of the old attitude, since, as Cahill says:

Works by women artists in traditional China tended to treat properly "feminine" subjects such as birds and flowers, or orchids; they conformed to what was expected more than they expressed deep feelings. The reason, one hastens to add, was social pressure: any attempt to break the confines of "polite" women's art would have been snuffed out quickly, and it doubtless was, many times.<sup>11</sup>

But many of the men in the show paint flowers too, sometimes also with great delicacy, and Xiao Zhufang's *Everlasting Spring* (Amaryllises) has a simple strength and boldness, in both stroke and color (black and bright red), not unlike that of the great German expressionist Emil Nolde.

Indeed, in the context of Chinese painting, what do the words "traditional," "conservative,"



"derivative," or for that matter "innovative," "original," "individual," "experimental" really mean? Westerners discussing Chinese painting tend to get tangled up in the nuances of such terms because, for the Chinese, none of them has quite the same meaning one assigns to it in the Western tradition. There is, I think, a paradox at the heart of Chinese painting; self-expression versus tradition and authority, each serving as a great ideal in classic Chinese painting. Lucy Lim presents the subjective, individualistic side very well when she says that the "literati" aesthetic theory stated that painting should not simply be a recording of observed nature and visual truthfulness, but should, instead, express the artist's inner personality. It should capture the spirit or essence of the things depicted, which could be achieved through the calligraphic potential of the Chinese brush. Painting became a highly personal creative act whose sole function was self-expression.<sup>12</sup>

And yet artists of later generations could — were even encouraged to — transcribe (we would be likely to say copy) these personal expressions, and their work would still be considered creative.

If the older women in the exhibition, and several of the men as well, bring this paradox forcibly to mind, the most striking thing about the four younger women (Yang Yanping, born in 1934; Zhai Xiuhuan, born in 1946; Nie Ou, born in 1948; and Shao Fei, born in 1954) is that they do not. Each of these women has a style which could not possibly be confused with any other's; each shows an awareness of the lessons of Western art without sacrificing her "Chineseness." These paintings are not undigested bits borrowed from badly-understood Western painters, as is so often the case with Eastern artists who try to "modernize" their art overnight.

Zhao Xiuhuan paints flowers, but her *Mountain Stream*, dated 1982, bears little resemblance to the flower painting tradition of the past. Her precisely-delineated wildflowers by the stream suggest, rather, an affinity with Andrew Wyeth.<sup>13</sup> One might also note, as the other polarity of this typically Chinese paradoxical equation, that the other modern American artist who has been of interest to Chinese art students of today is Jackson Pollock, with his freely-linear abstract-expressionist drawings and drip paintings,<sup>14</sup> while the large scale of Zhao's plants (they fill most of the space of the vertical scroll, which is over fifty-two inches tall) calls to mind Georgia O'Keeffe's giant flower "blow-ups."

Two of these innovative younger women artists, Nie Ou and Shao Fei, are concerned with figural



**Xiao Shufang** (1911- ), Beijing woman artist.  
 "Everlasting Spring" (Amaryllises), undated.  
 Title inscribed by Wu Zuoren (artist's husband) in seal script.  
 Chinese ink and color on paper.  
 78 x 48.5 cm. (30 3/4 x 19 inches)

painting (whereas only six of the twenty-nine men are). Along with the newly-elevated status of meticulously-observed reality, this focus may stem in part from an attempt to salvage something of value from the wasteland of the Cultural Revolution era, when Jiang Qing (Mme Mao), the leader of the now-infamous "Gang of Four," defined the goals of Chinese painting in a more unequivocal and uncompromising form than had even been the case when Soviet-style socialist realism was being touted as the great model in the 1950s:

"We, too, should create what is new and original, new in the sense that it is socialist and original in the sense that it is proletarian."<sup>15</sup>

Jiang, unlike Mao himself, who maintained that socialist painting must raise its artistic as well as social standards in order to be effective, was in-

terested only in the political message a painting should convey.

It was in these years that traditional techniques and traditional themes — especially the types of meditative, poetic landscapes favored for centuries by the artist-scholar elite — came into total disfavor, though their elitist aspects had been attacked earlier. For example, Wang Chaowen lauded a folk art exhibit in 1958, in spite of technical deficiencies, saying:

“This is lyricism unattainable by those professional painters who think that exercises in sketching can be considered works of art.”<sup>16</sup>

Reports about the Cultural Revolution’s harassment and repression that have surfaced since 1976 tell of a “reign of terror” in which some artists were literally hounded to death, many were blacklisted and forbidden to exhibit, sometimes even to paint, and, in a further echo of Nazi Germany, Jiang even had the works of these “counter-revolutionary,” “revisionist” artists held up to ridicule in two exhibitions of “Black Paintings” in 1974.<sup>17</sup> Landscape paintings received the most stringent criticism of all. In 1978, Li Hsiung-ts’ai said:

“The gang of four forbade us to do landscapes, saying that they had no revolutionary significance or were even dangerous ‘soft daggers.’ The gang did things like ruling rocks out of our paintings and prohibiting the use of black ink.”<sup>18</sup>

The poster-style realist paintings Jiang favored now linger mainly on advertising billboards, which is appropriate, since their propaganda slogans had much in common with American hard-sell advertising, a fact that has become increasingly apparent since Chinese billboards began to shift from moralizing slogans to product-selling slogans.

Little remains of that crude, blatant style in either Nie Ou or Shao Fei, if indeed any trace ever existed. Nie Ou’s large (almost sixty-five inches tall) multi-figured drawing *Dew*, dated 1981, done in black and grey ink, with flesh-toned areas in the figures as the only contrast, does present us with a new-era theme: young people bringing lunch to workers in the fields, and these young people are drawn with considerable charm as well as freshness, but they are beautifully set off — compositionally as well as psychologically — against the older laborers, evocative of the back-breaking toil of tilling the soil. Shao Fei’s even larger 1981 painting (over sixty-eight inches tall) is titled *Last Song of the Grand Historian*; the single, powerfully evocative figure it contains was, to me, the most monumental work in the exhibition. With its

heavy lines, yet vagueness of form, the painting has something of the bold expressionism, the haunting power, of Kathe Kollwitz’ images of grieving mothers. Assuredly there is nothing “feminine,” “overly-refined,” or too “elegant” in this image. Though the theme evokes great images from China’s history, the style shows a perfectly-assimilated knowledge of Western art, which is perfectly at home with the calligraphy of the East.

Fewer of the women painters in this exhibition are represented by landscapes than is the case with the men (two women to nineteen men); however, this ratio may have less significance than first appears, since the four women expatriate painters presented by Li in his catalogue of the Drenowatz collection all paint landscapes. But Yang Yanping’s *Towering Mountain* is easily the most abstract work in the show. The technique might seem conventional enough when one describes it: fine, delicate ink lines, with small splatters in places, akin to some of the lines of the great seventeenth-century painter Shitao; broad grey washes, faint traces of delicate blue and pink color. Yet how different it is, nevertheless. Shitao’s rocks seem tortuous and busy, next to Yang’s boldly-simplified form, where everything is reduced to its essence, where all details are expunged, except for a few fine lines, which stand out all the more effectively as a result.<sup>19</sup>

These four younger women are among those artists Cahill finds most innovative, and he — rightly, I think — considers it significant that it is women who are making such breakthroughs.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps, indeed, these women are more easily able to be individually creative because they have not quite the same weight of tradition behind them that the men do. While it is possible to make a direct correlation between age and innovation with the women, I did not find the same correlation between birth dates and degree of innovativeness or ability to build on the Chinese tradition among the men. In their case, several of the most powerful and individual were older artists; yet some of the older men were also the most conservative and derivative. Indeed, whereas the women painters I most admired were all born after 1930, the men whose paintings struck me most forcibly were all born before 1930. Of course this is a purely personal reaction, the determinant criteria not being specific styles but individuality and power of expression. Many of the paintings I responded to could be described as traditional, but none, I think, as merely derivative — whether of Chinese or of Western sources. This is the reaction of someone closely involved in art and art history, but not steeped in the Chinese tradi-



tion, either the artistic or the scholarly tradition, though it is possible that this very non-involvement may stimulate a more clear-eyed approach. In Chinese art today it is not so much a question of tradition versus revolution (after all, the socialist-realist art of the Revolution seems quite reactionary to Western eyes), but of tradition versus evolution, and it is the women who seem to reveal what that tradition is evolving towards most clearly.

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Doratheia K. Beard is a professor of art history at Northern Illinois University.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>. In cooperation with the Chinese Artists' Association of the People's Republic of China. The last stop of the exhibition is the University of Minnesota, in Minneapolis, where it will close on December 1, 1985.

<sup>2</sup>. Though this is the favorite current slogan, it is not really new. Arnold Chang, in *Painting in the People's Republic of China: The Politics of Style* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), p. 11, says that the "Hundred Flowers" movement was a Party rectification campaign "which called for open discussion and debate" in 1956. But from 1957 on it was generally eclipsed in favor of propagandistic aims and poster-realist styles.

<sup>3</sup>. Of the sixty-six paintings by thirty-six artists included in the show, ten paintings were produced by seven women artists.

<sup>4</sup>. (Honolulu: U. of Hawaii Press, 1977), p. 24.

<sup>5</sup>. Cahill and Sullivan also contributed essays to the catalogue. Several of the women represented in this show took part in an exhibition of the Beijing painting Academy in Canada in 1981, but it appears to have gone totally unremarked by the art periodicals which regularly review current exhibitions (such as *Art News* and *Art International*).

<sup>6</sup>. Cahill, p. 26. Sullivan's pioneering 1959 book, *Chinese Art in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: U. of California Press), p. 85, lists a Chinese Women's Art Association as having been founded in Shanghai in 1934, but he apparently deemed it, and the women artists who founded it, not important enough to discuss.

<sup>7</sup>. Incidentally, of four recent sociological studies on women in modern China, none appeared to consider painting at all, though one mentioned poetry.

<sup>8</sup>. As quoted in the catalogue of the Arts Council of Great Britain's 1976 exhibition, *Peasant Paintings from Hu County, Shensi Province, China*, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup>. Chu-Tsing Li, *Trends in Modern Chinese Painting* (The C.A. Drenowatz Collection) Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1979), p. 26. Ling Shu-Hua, born in 1908, was known almost more for her literature than her painting, before she left China.

<sup>10</sup>. Li, p. 171. Tseng was born in 1923.

<sup>11</sup>. Cahill, p. 26.

<sup>12</sup>. Lim, p. 19.

<sup>13</sup>. For example, Wyeth's *Spring Beauty*, dated 1943, which is in the University of Nebraska Art Gallery in Lincoln, Nebraska. Currently, we are told, Wyeth is very much admired by the younger Chinese artists, for whom meticulously observed realism is something to be esteemed as high art for the first time since the Emperor Hui Tsung painted birds and branches with almost scientific accuracy in the early twelfth century.

<sup>14</sup>. An example might be the 1944 untitled drawing acquired by the Art Institute of Chicago in 1966, which was recently on view as part of the exhibition "Great Drawings from the Art Institute of Chicago."

<sup>15</sup>. "Summary of the Forum on the Work in Literature and Art in the Armed Forces with which Comrade Lin Piao Entrusted Comrade Chiang Ch'ing," *Peking Review*, no. 23, June 2, 1967, p. 13, quoted in Chang, p. 23. Chang's is the best account I have found of this complex relationship.

<sup>16</sup>. "Wall Paintings by Peasant Artists," *Chinese Literature*, 1, 1959, pp. 197-8, quoted in Chang, p. 41.

<sup>17</sup>. See Chang, p. 46; Sullivan, *Contemporary Chinese Painting*, p. 29.

<sup>18</sup>. "NPC-Inspired Writers, Artists Plan Many New Works," *Daily Report*, March 10, 1978, p. E 8, quoted in Chang, pp. 46-7.

<sup>19</sup>. For example, see Plate XLII, *Wandering Around Mt. Huayang*, in the exhibition catalogue, *Treasures from the Shanghai Museum, 6000 Years of Chinese Art*, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1983.

<sup>20</sup>. Cahill, p. 26.





## CREATIVE RELATING

by Gong Shu

Creativity is a spontaneous expression of the vitality of life. It is marked by innocence, freshness, uniqueness, unadorned devotion, and full concentration of the self in the process. It is an assertion of one's being in the world—like grass sprouting on the ground, a fawn leaping in the wood, a dolphin frolicking in the ocean, or a child rolling on a sandy beach. It is marked by excitement, authenticity, joy, and total involvement of the self—in the world, not in detachment or alienation.

One day, some time ago, I left my youngest daughter, Meiling, at her kindergarten. As I was walking away I saw Chris, a boy her age, run toward her. The two of them embraced and then held hands and walked to a sandbox to play. Such spontaneity, such total involvement of the self in the immediate situation, such innocence, freshness, and excitement is what I mean by creativity. There is a genuine meeting of the essential selves, without masks, without calculation. This is creative relating. Children know it well.

### Creative Process

In discussing creativity, I am confining myself to the process. The creative process is relating. One does not create in a vacuum, whether this process involves art materials, music, science, or another person. Creativity is relating and it is also a way of living. Creative relating is characterized by openness—openness to the always new, always changing environment or to the other. It involves mutuality—the self provides an environment for the other, in which the potentials of the other can be realized. This in turn enhances and actualizes the potentialities of the self. All genuine creative growth involves a spontaneous interplay of complementary forces and a production of something new, a synthesizing or harmonizing of previously distinct components. It also means acceptance and affirmation of the always new, unique moment and phenomenon.

Ideas such as these are found in many religious as well as many humanistic thinkers—in Erich Fromm, Carl Jung, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel, Paul Tillich, Rollo May, and others. They are also found in ancient Taoism, which is my own native philosophy. I would like to share with you a

brief account of how Taoism sees creative relating.

Let me start with a statement from a Taoist philosopher, Lao Tzu, regarding creativity:

All things originate in Tao.  
They are nurtured by Te,  
Becoming things, they gain forms  
Through their innate tendencies [Shih]  
they become complete.

All things originate in Tao  
By Te they are nourished,  
Guided, cared for,  
Sheltered, comforted,  
Developed, and protected.  
Creating without taking credit,  
Nourishing without interfering.  
This is the nature of Te.<sup>1</sup>

Here Tao simply means the way—the way life is, the way things are. Tao is the spontaneous expression of life itself. Thus, Tao finds expression in everything. Te means potentials, the creative energy within each of us. Lao Tzu's statement about Te implies that every organism has an innate potential and an innate tendency to sustain, enhance, and complete itself. An organism inherently functions to find harmonious relationships with its environment that suit its needs, potentials, and resources. The innate tendency works through the receptivity and responding behavior of the organism within its environment. Through this living process the organism will actualize its potentials as best it can. This is the organism's spontaneous, natural growth process. Lao Tzu expressed this insight in chapter twenty-five of *Tao Te Ching*:

Man's standard is Earth.  
Earth's standard is Heaven.  
Heaven's standard is Tao.  
Tao's standard is the spontaneous.<sup>2</sup>

### Separation and Differentiation

To be creative, then, is to follow one's spontaneous growth process. This process of growth is expressed in the interaction of opposites, the yin and the yang. Yin and yang refer to the play of opposites, each of which influences the other. This mutuality is interdependence: the opposites mutually depend on each other to be what they are. Even more, they are present to some degree in each other. This is the basis of what Taoists call interpenetration and the great sympathy. This is the Taoist way of pointing out our capacity to be deeply touched by and in tune with, say, suffering people across the world, with sur-

prises of nature, or with each other when we first meet.

This play of opposites and interdependence can be observed in nearly every organism. It is seen as sexual in nature, in the sense that life works through pairs of opposites which unite together to foster new life and growth. In sexual opposites some degree of each opposite is concealed in the other—some degree of feminine in the masculine, or the masculine in the feminine. Jung recognized this, as does Taoism and the philosophy of yin-yang polarity; this sharing is the basis of organic growth and creativity, and thus of human creativity as well. Opposites seek each other out in a relating of love. Love, the urge for unity, is the generative center of creativity and relationship. Interestingly, this profound thought is also expressed by Socrates in his speech on love, in Plato's *Symposium*.

This creative urge for relating and for unity is the source of all energies of life. Dylan Thomas speaks of the creative urge in this way:

The force that through the green fuse  
drives the flower  
Drives my green age; . . .  
The force that drives the water  
through the rocks  
Drives my red blood.<sup>3</sup>

Separation and differentiation are also inevitable stages of the creative process.

### Encounter and Relationship

From separation and differentiation one moves to encounter and relationship. It is Eros, the yearning for union, that urges one to reach out, to create. This desire for reaching out can be transmuted into a universal love, agape, which enables us to unite and reach harmony with all of life. Creativity requires one to accept change and separation. Creativity requires one to let go; a child must let go of the mother, a mother must let go of the child. This detachment requires each to have the courage to flow with the moment and accept change and difference, to accept each moment as a unique phenomenon. Creative relating is a process of interdependence within which each person must accept himself or herself as a unique being.

Harmony is created out of diversity, not out of identity. In the creative process of relating one loses the self in the unity; one is changed, yet remains completely in touch with the self as an individual. One needs to be completely aware of the uniqueness of the individual and have the courage to be fully present as the

real self even in time of stress and doubt, for creativity is the dynamic interplay of opposite forces.

To be fully creative is to be fully present, to be fully involved in the moment. Creativity is a person's total involvement in an expression of his or her being. It is like the dancer who creates the phenomenon of dance. The dance exists only insofar as the dancer is in the process of creating it. The poet W.B. Yeats said it this way:

O chestnut-tree, great-rooted blossomer,  
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?  
O body swayed to music, O brightening  
glance,  
How can we know the dancer from the  
dance?<sup>4</sup>

### The dancer and the dance are one.

The dancer is concentrating on the process of dancing and is fully aware of the total phenomenon of dance. But if the dancer becomes conscious of herself as making the dance, the dance breaks. If she is conscious of her balance, she loses it. The student driver who is learning to drive a stick-shift car is a similar example; the minute he tries to memorize the gear-shifting process, the car stalls. If a chef is worried about her sick husband at home, she burns the food.

Genuine creativity, then, requires full concentration and full awareness—there is no division between the creator and the created. Genuine creativity is a total immersion of the self in the process.

As Yeats' words express, the creative person is in intimate touch with the creative process, so intimate that the dancer and the dance are indistinguishable. The Zen teacher D.T. Suzuki said regarding this state of creativity, "When a man reaches this stage of 'spiritual' development, he is a Zen artist of life. He does not need, like the painter, a canvas, brushes, and paints. . . His hands and feet are the brushes and the whole universe is the canvas on which he depicts his life. . . This picture is history."<sup>5</sup>

### Artist of Life

What does all this mean for relationships? In creating dance, the dancer becomes one with the dance. In living creatively, the individual is an artist of life—the person, the process, and the work of art are one. Creativity is spontaneous, total absorption and involvement in whatever is present. In creative relating, the individuals are fully involved, fully present, and aware of their full being, their mutuality. The person and the process are



one. When this happens, an hour, two hours, a day spent with another or others is exhilarating. Remember how one's spirit can be lifted and energized by an affirming glance from a total stranger in a subway crowd? In this fleeting moment one experiences the other's unbroken spontaneous presence and responsiveness.

In the creative process of relating, a person is fully immersed in an experience to the extent that he or she is lost as a separate being, yet remains uniquely free as an individual. The person experiences for the first time with full awareness the unique reality of the moment.

This ideal relationship with the world is "pure experience." To be in "pure experience" requires one to see the world without "desire," without expectation, without attachment, without addictions. All of life is nurtured by universal forces which bring out the potential of each organism. The Taoist calls this the infinite ground of sympathy. Intimacy grows out of the self's genuine relatedness with the world and with others—the total immersion of the self in the experience. This immersion gives meaning to life. Intimacy is full relatedness—the feeling of connection and the feeling of being in touch. This genuine relatedness is what I call creative relating.

However, given the social and economic conditions of today, this creative relating is difficult to achieve. The daily news is filled with sad and terrible events. We need constant renewal in the face of so many forces that threaten our creative relating.

### **Obstacles to Creative Relating**

Let me point out now some of the obstacles to creative relating and give some examples. Let us also remember that these obstacles in our experience are the artist's materials we are challenged to transform into creative relating.

This time is very challenging. The current culture reveals a highly developed "left-brain" orientation. It values linear, verbal, and analytical thinking, and leaves little room for, or sensitivity to, "right-brain" activity, that is, intuitive awareness which sees the gestalt, the whole configuration. Right-brain activity can be cultivated only through sensory and intuitive awareness. Recognizing this state of affairs, we must allow intuition to guide us and allow our senses to experience the world in order to absorb and participate in its richness.

In this highly developed technocratic or "left-brain" society, intellect and even so-called spiritual growth have outstripped emotional development. Bodily functions of sensing, feel-

ing, tasting, even seeing or hearing, are at times inhibited or repressed by the intellect. A person eventually becomes a total thinking being, a functionary, devoid of feeling and of full spontaneous, intuitive awareness of what he or she is experiencing. The consequence of such repression of emotional experience is "meaninglessness," "emptiness." The joy of life is missing.

Many writers have expressed concern about how our way of life constricts our experience. Fromm noted the way in which everyone is conscious of using everyone else.<sup>6</sup> People become commodities. Recently, just as the professional football strike was starting, the owner of one of the teams was giving the players a pep talk about how great and important all of them were. Then he made a slip. He said, enthusiastically, "You are our commodities." One player asked another, "What is a commodity?" Then he understood what he meant to the owner: he was a thing to be bought, sold, and controlled, an object of investment and exploitation.

Marcel, too, distinguishes between being and having.<sup>7</sup> Being is who a person is, his or her real self, living in a world of persons and creativity. Having is related to functions; a function, or we may say, a role, is something one has, not something one is at bottom. The function lives in a world of things.

Buddhism also distinguishes between being and being this or that. We run serious risks of identifying ourselves simply with being this or that—a function, a role, an identity. In doing so, we lose our creative selves and freedom, and reduce ourselves to the limitations imposed by social roles.

Consider how such a reduction of ourselves hinders creative relating. Our relationships, whether with people, nature, or things, can be blocked by various fixations, or attachments, whether these attachments are to past, to future, to a person, to an idea, or to values set up by others. Separation of the self and the experience will result if our minds are bound by such fixations.

If we rely on past experience, we are dealing with a concept of the situation itself. We lack awareness of the actual present circumstances. Similarly, when we obsessively anticipate and prepare for the future, we are less aware than we need to be of what is going on at the present. Attachments to the past or to the future deter us from immediate contact with the present, its "hereness" and "nowness." We become outsiders in regard to what is immediately present to us. Our energy is locked

up in various other temporal/spatial dimensions to a degree that we are not able to participate or function fully in the present. We lose awareness of our own immediate needs. By doing this we become alienated from the real self, as Karen Horney calls it. We become outsiders to our own experience, detached and disengaged from our actual awareness of the present. In this state of alienation and disengagement intimacy is impossible.

We may also become fixated on values set up by the environment—the “shoulds” and “should nots,” the standards of others. We become very watchful and judgmental of our own behavior. We use the values of others to modify our natural responses, in order to win their approval. I myself often feel this kind of conflict when I am asked to do paintings for commission, in contrast to how I feel when I paint spontaneously, for myself. The judgmental attitude always separates the self from the act. It causes a conflict between the real self and the image of the self. In this experience the “I” is constantly examining something in order to change it, so there is always a dualistic conflict and therefore a protracted separation. As Horney says:

As soon as . . . [the individual who needs] to be liked by everybody becomes compulsive, the genuineness of his feeling diminishes. . . [and] his spontaneous interest in work itself decreases. Conflicting compulsive drives. . . impair his integration, his faculty to decide and give direction. . . neurotic pseudo-solutions though representing attempts at integration, . . . deprive him of autonomy because they become a compulsive way of living. <sup>8</sup>

This compulsiveness involves repetition of expectations, and can lead to self-torture. For example, a client of mine was so obsessed with the fear of rejection, and fear of not being liked, that she withdrew from involvement in group art therapy. She usually sat in a corner, feeling angry at herself and the therapist, because, as she said, “I don’t know how to draw. No matter what I do, it will be wrong. I can’t please you.” Today, following her therapy, this person is back in her community, able to relate more creatively and self-confidently.

If we single out some dimensions or parts of ourselves either to avoid or pursue obsessively, we create energy problems. Our energy becomes locked in self-condemnation, fear, and compulsive striving. Experiencing only parts of ourselves makes us see ourselves in piecemeal ways, as if we were merely the sum

total of disconnected parts. “This is known in psychiatric literature as compartmentalization or psychic fragmentation. . . [the person] has no feeling for himself as a whole organism.” <sup>9</sup>

When certain emotions are suppressed or concentrated on exclusively and compulsively, natural relationships are inhibited or curtailed. Rogers contrasts the closed and the open state in these terms:

To the extent that the individual is denying to awareness (or repressing, if you prefer that term) large areas of his experience, then his creative formings may be pathological or socially evil, or both. To the degree that the individual is open to all aspects of his experience, and has available to his awareness all the varied sensings and perceivings which are going on within his organism then the novel products of his interaction with his environment will tend to be constructive both for himself and other. <sup>10</sup>

There are serious consequences when full awareness of ourselves and the other is blocked. Full awareness requires great continuous energy, for it is easy to slip out of such concentrated involvement. We may feel bored and alienated, like an outsider to our experience. Nothing is new; everything is the same. “I’ve heard it all,” is the lament. When we have that attitude, natural responses are deadened. We are not alert to the nuances of the moment, to the spontaneous response. We are bored because we think everything we are experiencing is the same old thing, identical to what we have already encountered. Life becomes meaningless, empty.

What is happening here? Look carefully at how the mind works when we are bored—a potentially rich experience is reduced to a repeatable concept, to a category. In this state, what is encountered is a concept, an idea of a person or an event, not the actual person or event confronted. A concept acquired from the past surfaces to judge and to analyze the present. As a result the full present, with all its subtle nuances, multiple dimensions, and fascinating mystery is lost. “He is a German: he can’t express his feelings.” “He is just an intellectual.” “She is an artist, an irrational person.” “They are Arabs; you can’t understand them.” “I’m depressed. Nothing ever changes; I feel hopeless.”

All these expressions show the mind reducing the profound subtlety and nuances of the moment to repetitive ideas, to abstractions, to fixations. No creative relating is possible when



we are locked into such abstractions, fixations, and expectations. Boredom results.

Honesty is also essential to creative relating. When feelings are not directly and honestly expressed, we deny ourselves. In the process relationship is stifled, and growth in relationship and in the self is impeded. This result is especially evident when dealing with feelings generally considered negative, for example, anger. In the impulse to repress the surge of anger all feelings are repressed. A habit of suppressing anger may lead to passive-aggressive behavior, or to self-torturing or somatic symptoms, such as headaches, upset stomachs, or more lasting chronic debilities.

Emotions—even negative ones—released in creative relationships, centered in loving and caring, produce a generative power that is mutually shared and mutually energizing, rising above the petty pain of “hurt feelings.” What happens here is that energy customarily used to block the expression of anger (or other emotions) is turned to creative purpose. Thus, by not expressing feelings directly and honestly, we become alienated from ourselves. In such states of alienation, genuine intimacy is impossible.

The solution is to let go of habitual clings, let go of the old scripts of the past, let go of anticipation of the future. The individual can then flow spontaneously on the great waves of nature without fear, as T’ao Yuan-ming, the Chinese poet, said. Life requires a great deal of risk taking; in this risk taking each moment is lived new and fresh, and experience is magnified. When one plunges fully into the constant process of change, one experiences life intensely and achieves an intimate harmony with all of life.

The following is a personal example of creative relating. My nine-year old daughter knows how to get her needs met. Waiting for me to embrace her, and becoming disappointed when I am distracted by someone or something else, she does not pout or go off alone to sulk. Instead she will come to me and say, “Mama, cuddle,” or “Mama, I want you to spend more time with me.” Obviously, I am not able to spend as much time with her as she needs. But she does not hesitate to express her feelings, and we usually work out something so she will not feel neglected. Children know how to be spontaneous and honest. They may be our best teachers.

But being honest does not mean to descend to carping criticism or to flay the other with self-righteousness, with distorted personal, or rather, egoistic claims. This is false honesty,

honesty that is no more than a mask for sadistic oppression. Authentic honest expression of emotion deepens a relationship and makes creative relating possible.

## **Creativity and Environment**

To be creative is to free oneself for total involvement in an existential moment—body, mind, and spirit. The first step is to cultivate the ability to integrate the “right-brain” functioning with the “left-brain” functioning that our world demands. This freedom to feel, to sense, to emote, to experience the world with our bodies as well as our minds, requires a return to intuitive knowing. We must learn from the child and bring the child’s innocence, open honesty, curiosity, enthusiasm, and excitement into everyday living. It means slowing down, escaping the “push-button” culture syndrome—instant breakfast, instant gratification. We must take time to experience life’s phenomena. Most of us live in a “hothouse,” in air-conditioned cars, air-conditioned rooms cut off from nature in all its multifold dimensions. Creativity lies in touching, feeling the natural environment.

Relating to the environment and relating to other persons go together.

Creative relating is a meeting of real persons who are genuinely caring and honestly free and open to each other. It is a spontaneous and effortless expression of each self toward the other.

Creative living demands trusting ourselves and owning all the dimensions of the self. It requires accepting the self as unique, whereby we can come to respect the uniqueness and dignity of the other.

In this creative process of relating we touch something within another and, freeing that person to develop his or her potential, in the meantime affirm the self. If change occurs in us or in the other, it is not through manipulation but through a spontaneous growth process of two persons genuinely relating.

Genuine relating is a sharing of life and life’s experiences, fully, freely, and honestly, without risk of loss of identity or of trespass of our own boundaries.

Genuine relating involves the whole person in the creative process. This process emerges within vital experience in the flow of real feelings, in our intimate relating to nature, to ourselves, and to others.

To be creative is to encounter the world with our real self, with all of our dimensions, our own convictions and values, not with the

"shoulds" and "should nots" that are the standards of others. Creativity is the process that actualizes our potentials as humans. To be creative makes us whole.

We can see, then, the profound mystery of creative relating. It involves nothing less than our whole self, in every moment of existence/being. It demands total absorption in the full scope of each present moment, with each person. To relate creatively is to be whole. To be whole is to be completely present in body, mind, and spirit, with each other and with our world in every encounter. In being whole we affirm all of life, and we can be more freely available to meet the needs and changes of each moment. We create each other, and share in creating the world.

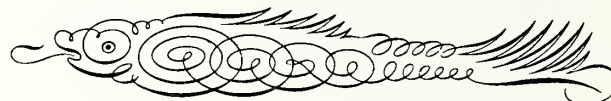
Gong, Shu, born and raised in China, is an art therapist in Webster Groves, Missouri. She has taught painting, art history, literature and oriental philosophy and conducted workshops on Taoism and Chinese painting. Her paintings are included in private collections in China and the United States.

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#### Footnotes

- 1 Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, Chap. 51, ed. Wang P'i in *Ssu Pu Pei Yao*, vol. 341, compiled by Ting P'u Tzu et al. (Taipei: Chung Hua Press, 1965- 66), pp. 9-10, translation my own.
- 2 Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, chap. 25, quoted in Fung Yu-Lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 1 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 187.
- 3 Dylan Thomas, "The Force that through the Green Fuse," *Collected Poems* (New York: New Directions Books, 1953), p. 10.
- 4 W.B. Yeats, "Among School Children," *Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), p. 214.
- 5 In D.T. Suzuki's foreward to Eugene Herrigel's *Zen in the Art of Archery* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 15.
- 6 Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1960), p. 139.
- 7 Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 150.
- 8 Karen Horney, *Neurosis and Human Growth* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1950), p. 179.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Carl Rogers, "Toward a Theory of Creativity," in *Creativity and Its Cultivation*, ed. H.H. Anderson (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), pp. 73- 74.





Dear readers,

Many thanks to *The Creative Woman* for publishing a special issue about the life and activities of Chinese women. *Women of China* is privileged to contribute ten articles. We sincerely hope this cooperation will strengthen the ties between the women of our two countries.

*Women in China* started publication in 1956, and circulates in 133 countries. The magazine covers the work, study and life of Chinese women in socialist development, and informs readers of how these women deal with work, love, marriage, families, family planning and child education. We hope the articles here may give you some idea of the creativity of Chinese women and their ways of coping with their problems.

*Women of China*  
Editorial Board

## MENOPAUSE AND WOMEN'S HEALTH

by Nai Xin

By middle age most women have acquired a wealth of work and life experience. It is a rewarding period when they often see their career successes furthered and can enjoy the love and care of their growing children and family. However, for many women this golden period is troubled by menopausal disorders. While in most women the symptoms are minimal and do not interfere with their daily lives, some women suffer severe disorders. Many doctors in China are looking into ways to help women cope with the physical and emotional changes that often accompany menopause.

### Helping Menopause Patients

At 80, instead of leading the restful life of a pensioner, Doctor Wang Yaoyun, the former chief of the Gynecological and Obstetrical Department of the Beijing People's Hospital, still devotes much of her time in aiding patients and researching menopausal disorders. She does volunteer work in the outpatient clinic for menopause patients three mornings a week, and has been working to popularize basic health care. Dr. Wang is aware of the need to provide care for menopause cases. In recent years, life expectancy in China has risen rapidly. Women in some regions live as

long as 75 years. Among these elder women five percent suffer from menopause disorders. Dr. Wang knows only too well her patients' complaints.

In some women, the reduced levels of estrogen in the body cause many symptoms. They range from endocrine disorders, nervous disturbances, and hypometabolism, resulting in excessive sweating to buzzing in the ears, backaches, fatigue, and high blood pressure. In some serious cases, the symptoms remained for as long as five years.

Many women also undergo psychological changes. Some become depressed and moody; some have difficulty sleeping at night; and some sometimes become paranoid. One woman was convinced she had cancer, another became obsessive about checking behind doors and under tables for intruders before going to bed. In some serious cases, these symptoms cause the women to lose the desire to live.

Through years of experience Dr. Wang believes that a combination of Chinese and Western medicine is the most effective method for treating physical menopause disorders. Dr. Wang also firmly believes that, along with medication, good nutrition, more exercise and counseling are important in helping women live a regular life.

### The Psychology of Menopause

Dr. Wang encourages her patients to be open with her about their emotions and concerns. She asks them detailed questions about family income, living conditions, eating habits, family relations, and working conditions. Many of her patients find it a great relief to be able to discuss such problems with Dr. Wang and often feel more confident and relaxed after the first consultation.

A woman worker in the Shijingshan Special Steel Plant found herself becoming very short-tempered and irritated with her only son. One day he made some remark that infuriated her. The woman snatched a kitchen knife and slashed out at him but was luckily stopped short by her husband. After this incident the woman was terribly depressed and hated herself.

Dr. Wang talked this out with her and pointed out that many women are emotionally upset during menopause. After several long sessions the woman regained self-confidence and control of her temper. She discussed the

problem with her husband and son and they all worked together to help her through this trying period.

A staff member at Beijing Pharmaceutical Company became quite a hypochondriac. She was terrified by slight dizziness, irritated by noise, and was reluctant to meet people. Tired of her work and unable to cope with these daily paranoias, she was thinking of retiring early. Dr. Wang told her, "There's really nothing to fear. You're not yet 50. You'll just feel more depressed if you retire. Look at me, I'm 80 this year. I go to work by bus and have plenty of energy. You must give your colleagues a chance to understand you and help you overcome these problems. Once you are confident about your work, you'll be in a better mood."

A young radio announcer suffered from irregular menses. She was easily irritated and exhausted, and was often absent from work. Her marital life was also badly affected. Her liver, kidney, and blood tests showed nothing wrong. Dr. Wang diagnosed the case as a menopause disorder. She advised that the woman exercise several times a day to strengthen her physique and stimulate blood circulation. Dr. Wang also discussed how to overcome her patient's recent loss of sexual in-

terest and even suggested correct positions during sexual intercourse to adjust for the retroversion of the uterus.

Another young girl had had her uterus removed because of a myoma. Along with some physical problems, the young woman felt pessimistic about her future. She could not sleep, had no appetite, and lost a lot of weight. Talking with Dr. Wang, she said she was very worried that she would now never find a husband. Dr. Wang spent many hours giving her encouragement and advice. She pointed out that it was possible to have a happy life without children or she could maybe marry someone with a child or adopt one.

Dr. Wang does not only counsel the women themselves but also often talks with the husband, giving advice on how to take care of his wife. She believes that a supportive home and work atmosphere are the best medicine for quick recovery.

### Popularizing Health Care Knowledge

To help popularize her findings on menopause symptoms and cures, Dr. Wang spent over a year researching a book, *Health Care During Menopause*, which was published last autumn. It is based on interviews with 1,145 women



Nai Xin



patients conducted by doctors and medical workers in five hospitals in Beijing. Most of the examples given are women workers, cadres, and technical personnel between 45 and 49. The book deals with the physiological and pathological phenomena accompanying menopause and provides solutions for common problems.

Most of the patients Dr. Wang treated in the out-patient clinic of the People's Hospital are personnel in the Ministry of Radio and Television, Ministry of Geology and Mineral Resources, and the No. 159 Middle School. Dr. Wang contacted 352 of them within the 45-52 age bracket. She also sorted out data from case histories of menopause patients and researched the menstrual cycle, conception and delivery, menopause, and the history of women's diseases.

Supported by medical workers in local districts, Dr. Wang interviewed 400 residents during general medical checkups of women's diseases. She also visited 430 families in the neighborhood, going from door to door in one of the hottest months in Beijing. It was a tough job for an 80 year-old woman, but this first-hand information gave her a wealth of data on menopause symptoms.

According to Dr. Wang, the average age of menopause in Beijing is  $48.16 \pm 3.79$ . The national level is 49.5. This slight difference shows that menopause is affected not only by genetic factors, health, and nutrition, but also by climate and social environment.

In order to give every symptom a plain and clear explanation, Dr. Wang did extensive reading on biology, geriatrics, and endocrinology. She then asked some of her patients to read the manuscript for added input and to see if the descriptions were easily understood. Some smiled at the passages "everything becomes offensive to the eye," or "finding fault in everything." Some told Dr. Wang, "I know so much more now—when it is necessary to call the doctor, and when I can manage by taking some medicine or exercising by myself."

## **Towards the Golden Age**

This popular guide book has been warmly received by medical workers at the grass-roots levels, as well as middle-aged women and their families. The data, detailed explanations and methods of treatment have reduced the previous mystery and uncertainty many of the

readers felt towards menopause. It has helped many women face this new period of life with greater confidence and courage. The practical measures included in the book ensure that their middle and old age will truly be their golden years.

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## SOLVING FAMILY CONFLICTS

by Rao Fudi

"During sixteen years, I have risen from an ordinary shop assistant to become manager of a provision shop.

"In the first eight years, I worked with the director of the No. 4 sales department and turned the shop into an advanced unit in the province by achieving the best sales record in the locality. Later, I was appointed director of the No. 5 sales department. The shop was in a remote mountainous area and had few patrons, so we had difficulty increasing our turnover. Despite the obstacles, we sent goods to consumers' homes, dressed the shop window attractively, and gained the patronage of the local people. Finally, the store became well-established and was cited a civic-oriented business in the province.

"In order to improve the quality of service and my own managing skills, I have read many foreign books on topics relating to business and I have tried to find out the laws that govern my work and to develop them into a theory. In 1982, I wrote my first thesis entitled 'Economic Management in Retail Sales.' I presented this paper first at a district symposium on the theory of trade and economics, and later at the annual meeting of the society of Trade and Economics in Jiangxi. All participants praised my thoughts on what is widely regarded as an important but largely unaddressed subject.

"However, while I was continuously seeking and advancing my career, the conflicts within my family deepened day by day. My husband was a school teacher, so he had a strict commute schedule, and my work hours were long. I even worked overtime before holidays. Though he prepared suppers for me, he grumbled each time. I was dreadfully tired from my work, and his complaints made me feel wronged and vexed, and sometimes I cried through dinner. I love both my cause and my family, and it seemed that I could only pursue one of the two.

"My husband also has a strong sense of his work, and he did not really want to hold me back. I interpreted his complaint as an expression of love and concern, otherwise why would he cook for me? I should make him understand my work, and more importantly, I

must respect him. He was fond of poems, so I decorated the room with a poem I copied. The poem compares a teacher to a candle which burns itself to light the path ahead for the others. At the same time, I composed a poem praising the work spirit of saleswomen. He was delighted to see the decoration and said humorously, 'Now you have become a poet!' Since he is a physical education instructor, whenever one of his trainees is transferred to a provincial athletic team, I cook a special meal for him to show my congratulations.

"Once, when my husband wasn't busy, I asked him to join me when I made a delivery for a customer. A peasant needed some brown sugar to compound medicine, but we had none in the shop. After learning that a store in another county had the sugar, I immediately posted money and a letter to request it. Soon, the sugar arrived. On the coming Sunday, my husband and I bicycled more than five kilometers to deliver it to the patient's house. The family was really quite moved that we went to such an effort. My husband was also deeply touched by their feeling, and on our way home he spoke highly of my work. Ever since that day he has never grumbled when I get home late."



Rao Fudi





Huang Shunxi

## WOMEN OVERPASS DESIGNERS

by Su Bian

After Beijing was made capital in the Yuan Dynasty (1206-1368), magnificent palaces and elegant pavilions were built by successive feudal rulers. However, the wide and spacious roads in Beijing are something new. Chang'an Boulevard, the broad main street which goes across the city proper, and once called Celestial Street, was at most a mud road seven meters wide, some 500 years ago. Beijing took on a new look after the founding of the New China in 1949. Some 36 overpasses built at busy intersections since 1972 signify a continually changing city.

Modern roads are a must to a developing city like Beijing, and overpasses are badly needed. Building the overpasses is the responsibility of the Municipal Design Institute, the job was assigned to the No. 2 Bridge Design Group under its Road and Bridge Section. The group consists of 11 designers, eight of them women. Six women undertake the main design work.

"My daughter once confessed that she was not sure whether girls could be as intelligent as boys, but I strongly objected her idea," said Luo Ling, head of the group. "Choose a field

that suits you best,' I said to her. 'Go ahead with it energetically—that way you would be sure to attain success.' This was, in fact, what Luo has done in the past twenty-some years.

In all those years Luo has spent most of her time either in an office or on construction sites, designing bridges or overpasses. In recent years, one assignment has always been waiting for her long before the other has been finished. Her father had wanted Luo, his tomboy-like daughter, to become a railway engineer like him, but she preferred bridge-designing, thinking them a link between Nature and man and between human beings.

The group was set up in 1977 to design an overpass at the former Janguomen Gate in the eastern part of Beijing. Luo Ling and her five women colleagues—Huang Shunxi, Wu Xilun, Wang Shuji, Liu Guiqin, and He Wei—were then already in their middle years, and had similar experiences. All of them had taken part in bridge building in hilly regions in the 1960s when they were young and carefree, without any family burden. The projects they undertook then were comparatively simple. They could learn much from the experience of others.

Today, as senior architects, they are expected

to design bridges which call for up-to-date expertise. Their workloads are heavy. They have to continually renew their knowledge and also help the younger generation improve their professional skills. What is more, all of them have families, though they vary in size. However, the eagerness to do their utmost was still there to pull them together in cheerful cooperation.

The Jianguomen project was then the biggest and most complicated in China, with three top levels for roads and two lower levels for subways. Special consideration had to be given to the already existing underground network of pipes and electric lines. The regular flow of 4,110,000 bicycles in this "kingdom of bicycles" is another important factor for consideration.

Construction started while the design work was still underway. The women finished their work within six months, two months ahead of schedule. To do this, they moved onto the construction site, putting up with the extremely hot July and August weather in Beijing and hordes of mosquitoes and other insects. They worked from morning to night each day and often on Sundays as well. There were not pocket calculators in those days, but still they covered thousands of pages of paper with calculations and produced hundreds of blueprints and plans.

No outsiders knew that during this time the two-year-old daughter of Huang Shunxi had contracted hepatitis and her mother-in-law was also seriously ill. Her husband, who also worked at a construction site, could not possibly look after two patients at the same time. Huang spent many days with her daughter till she fetched her mother from another province to look after the sick child for her. Huang then took her elder daughter along with her to live on the work site. Even with all these distractions, she finished her quota by working overtime.

"Hard work alone is not enough to complete a job," said Luo Ling, who represented the group. These women are inventive and creative. They are not content with doing things in a conventional way, though that might be simpler and easier. They always look forward to jobs that are challenging and call for new technology.

It was in this spirit they did the designs for the three-level Xizhimen Gate overpass, an even larger and more complicated project, in-

volving curves, slanting surfaces and slopes. They knew where their weak points were, and consulted foreign and Chinese sources before they worked out the most suitable methods of this job. Their project proved a success through the close cooperation of the construction unit. The magnificent Xizhimen Gate overpass in west Beijing has done a lot to ease traffic jams.

These women architects are all supported by their husbands in many household tasks. Luo Ling's husband, who teaches in an engineering institute, has a flexible work schedule. He does most of the cooking and washing. He Wei's husband prepares the supper for the family. He is always the first to be back since his office is only a stone's throw from home.

Wu Xilun and her husband planned carefully about sharing the household chores. Every day, Wu would buy some fried pancakes or buns for family breakfast on her way home from morning jogging, so that he could have plenty of time to concentrate on his studies. Every evening after supper, her husband would wash the dishes and do the cleaning while she often went back to her office to study until 10 o'clock.

"We each plan our life the way we want. Of course, we have to give up something in order to gain," said Wu. The woman architect did not have much time with her daughter, but she always reserved Sunday afternoon to talk things over with the girl, sharing her joys and complaints, telling her success stories of some outstanding women in Chinese history, and her personal experience in overcoming obstacles. Overpass designing was new to Wu, but she managed to catch up with the rest. Last year she was assigned to design a bridge, part of the No. 8 Wharf in Qingdao City, Shandong Province and learned through tackling new problems.

When asked how many bridges and overpasses they have completed, Luo Ling confessed they've been too busy to look back at what they've already done.



## WAN SHANSHAN— A BRIDGE SPECIALIST

by Xiao Ming

For many people, building bridges is a man's job. But I wonder what they would say if while crossing the majestic Jinan Road Bridge that spans the lower reaches of the Huanghe (Yellow) River, they were told that the seventh largest cable-stayed bridge in the world and the largest in Asia, was co-designed by a woman and a man. This bridge measures 2,023.4 meters in total, is 19.5 meters wide, with the main section stretching 220 meters. Its chief designers Wan Shanshan and Li Shoushan, engineers of the Transportation Planning and Designing Institute, Shandong Province, were in their thirties when they began to work on this bridge.

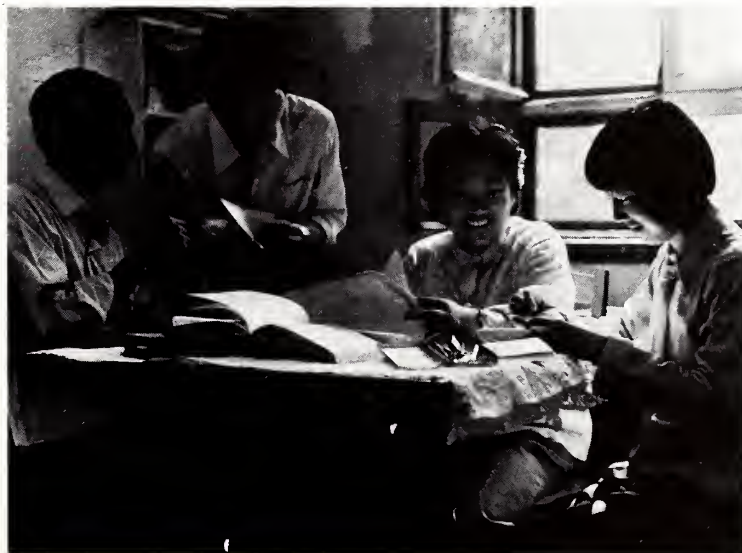
When China started to reorganize its national economy in 1977, Shandong provincial authorities decided that Jinan, the political, economic, and cultural center, and capital of the province, should be made more accessible. Communications were seriously hampered by the Huanghe River which flows past the city to the north. The only means of transport across the river were two ferry boats handling 1,500-2,000 cars and trucks, and 10,000 passengers every day. It was not unusual for a car to wait anywhere from two to six hours to get across. During the high-water season, traffic came to a complete standstill. Consequently, building a highway bridge was approved.

Wan Shanshan and Li Shoushan were excited over the mission. A great bridge to serve the

millions generation after generation would be the dream of any bridge architect. Cable-stayed bridges have only recently been constructed in a few other countries and offer the advantages of greater span and flexibility, better appearance, and lower cost. In 1975 Wan and Li designed the 104-meter Dagu River cable-stayed bridge near Qingdao, China's first long bridge of this kind. Designing the much bigger Jinan Bridge represented their new effort to rank China among the world's foremost modern bridge builders.

Their plan was to use 272 diagonal steel bracing cables, the longest one being 110 meters long weighing over three tons. The two cement-concrete pylons would be 70 meters high each. According to other designs for bridges of this type, the cables, after passing through the tower crosspiece on the tops, should be stretched many times until they are up to standard in tautness. This hazardous job must be done high above the ground. Wan and Li spent several sleepless months designing the best work plan. Although they often argued and neither one of them gave in easily, they finally worked out a plan which completed the stretching in one operation.

The bridge structure was so intricate that a tiny error could end in disaster. Whenever a problem came up while the cables were being stretched, Wan Shanshan would climb up the 68.4 meters of steel scaffolding to figure out a solution. Some of her male colleagues were afraid to venture up the pylons, but Wan overcame her fear, the bridge was too important to let anything stand in the way of successful completion.



Wan Shanshan, second, right

During these intense days, she was plagued by periodic vaginal hemorrhaging. One day she lost consciousness. By taking several shots of hemostatics every day, she controlled the bleeding and went back to work. But the hemorrhaging continued and when she could no longer work, she agreed to have a hysterectomy. Before she was fully recovered, she returned to the construction site. Her husband, Huang Xiangfeng, remarked, "She's given all she has to the bridge."

Now her male comrades on the construction site began to judge her in a new light. Her colleague Li Shoushan praised her for her iron will, well-organized way of life, and conscientious style of work. If there had been any doubt about her before, there certainly was not now.

The Huanghe River Road Bridge was completed in four years, and opened in July 1982. The project received an award for the design and construction from the government.

A civil engineer must be physically and mentally strong. Otherwise he or she would not be able to withstand the hard work on the construction site and the long stay away from home. Because women usually have greater family responsibilities and are thought to be physically weaker than men, they are often assigned the easier jobs.

But Wan Shanshan would not allow anyone else to map out a life for her, or restrict her opportunities. She has from the very first day struggled against the traditional prejudice toward women.

When her first child was 10 months old, Wan was assigned a job far away from her home. If Wan had told her superior that she would not leave her baby, she would surely have been permitted to stay at home and someone else would take the job. But she thought that bearing and bringing up a child should not be a barrier to women taking important jobs, jobs for which they were highly trained. So she left her child with her neighbor and went with her colleagues to the construction site.

At the worksite, Wan looked calm and collected, but she saw her baby son in every crying child. When she returned home, after about a month, she was ecstatic when she saw her son sunning in the courtyard.

Wan often went surveying with her male colleagues, lugging the instruments over all kinds of terrain. Since the leaders of her work unit

knew she could be counted on even though she now had two children, Wan has been entrusted with important design work over the past dozen years.

In 1975 work on the Dagu River Bridge was started. The design and construction took three years. Overall, Wan stayed for two years on the site, and brought her daughter along. During that time, Wan's husband, also a civil engineer, supported his wife in every way and took over the greater part of household chores. Following the example of their parents, the children have learned to be independent. Each member of the family, it seems, is always on the move. And even when they do meet, each one of them has his or her own affairs to attend to, so they rarely have a quiet moment to talk. Her husband, also doing well, has been promoted to deputy director of the Design Institute in recognition of his outstanding contribution. Her son is now grown and studies mathematics in college.

Over the past 20 years, Wan Shanshan has participated in the construction of 25 important bridges. The Jinan Bridge, the biggest challenge in her long career, won honor for China's bridge builders and for the women of China.





*Bian Xiulan, second, left*

## POPULARIZING OBSTETRICS IN MINORITY AREAS

by Bian Xiulan

I have worked at the Maternity and Child Health Center of Xinhua Sala Autonomous County for three years now. With a medical staff of ten, the Center cares for 15,300 households organized in 154 brigades in 10 communes. We have set up a health protection network consisting of professionally-trained medical personnel at the commune level, and paramedics and midwives at the village level.

The county is located in east Qinghai Province, 2,300 meters above sea level with people of Sala, Tibetan, Hui, and Han nationalities, the Salas constituting the majority. To get to the provincial capital Xining, the townspeople have to spend three days tramping over two mountains on a donkey's back, then ride on a sheepskin raft to cross the Huanghe (Yellow) River, traveling 170 kms. in all.

I was transferred from the department of gynecology and obstetrics at the county hospital to the Maternity and Child Health Center in 1980. Upon my arrival, I organized all the medical personnel in the Center to make a door-to-door survey of the physical condition of women of child-bearing age and children below the age of 7. Through this survey, we realized how much our services

were needed. Although many Sala women have taken off their veils and attend social activities, they are still under the influence of some superstitious and feudal notions. For instance, Sala girls seldom go to school; women students will not wear shorts even at sports events. Most important for our work, pregnant women still prefer to have their relatives help them with their deliveries at home instead of going to hospital, where the conditions are more sanitary. According to custom, when labor begins a family member sets a fire in front of the house to keep other people away. A doctor is called only when the pregnant woman is in difficult labor. Because of this backward method of delivery, the infant mortality rate is quite high in this area.

To change this situation but preserve the custom of having their relatives as midwives, we decided to set up a maternity team with public-spirited young mothers from each of the ethnic groups. By giving them elementary medical training in obstetrics, we upgraded the skills of some who were village doctors, and gave the others their first instruction in anatomy and physiology. To help them understand their lessons better, we made a big cloth doll to demonstrate essential points, and then showed them how to give pregnant women prenatal check-ups. After coming back to the classroom, we used charts, illustrations, and models to review what they had already learned. The young women gradually grew confident and eager to master some basic skills of modern delivery. To make sure their

theoretical knowledge was well grounded, we also set up a four-month refresher course which focused on clinical procedures. Those who did exceedingly well in the final examinations were sent for further professional training to a class run by the provincial women's federation. We now have 161 midwives in our county, of whom 83 are Salas, 57, Tibetans. They often make house calls to give the pregnant women in the area periodic check-ups and explain the scientific delivery method to them in their own language. The women who used to avoid check-ups now seek help. "Not one of them has failed to ask me for help with their delivery," said a satisfied midwife.

We tried to emphasize advantages of the modern delivery method. But we did not succeed at first. Take the imam in Tangfang Brigade, Jiezi Commune for example. His pregnant daughter was diagnosed as one likely to have complications in delivery so we suggested that he send her to the hospital. But the imam refused to listen to our advice. She was in labor for three days and nights but still did not give birth. At last, he consented to send his daughter to the hospital. Though in the end his daughter survived, the baby died inside its mother's womb. The imam felt so sorry, he became a supporter of the scientific delivery method in his village.

The people of Caotanba Brigade were ready to accept modern midwifery but could not be convinced of the importance of family-planning. To win them over, I gave them two figures: one was the number of the villagers, the other was the acreage of arable land in their village. I then pointed out that within three and a half years, the number of people in their village had doubled while their land had remained the same. Without family planning, I insisted, there would be no way that land could support any more people. The villagers thought this was a reasonable conclusion and began to persuade their daughters and daughters-in-law to practice contraception.

Recently, we have made full use of the mass media such as radio, the wall newspaper, meetings, and performances at festivals to make people aware of the advantage of the modern delivery method. In 1983, during the county's trade fair, we had an exhibition booth with pictures and models explaining the process of birth and appropriate medical procedures. It drew nearly 30,000 visitors. We

also tried to persuade pregnant women, their husbands and mothers-in-law in separate groups to accept these new ideas. We told them that during 1980-81, we saved 19 pregnant women who might have otherwise died; 8 had had difficult deliveries, 11 had suffered from serious pre-and post-partum hemorrhaging. Through our publicity work and the testimony of people from the area we could point to, the women have slowly acquired habits of daily hygiene and accepted modern mid-wifery.

Our health center was built from two warehouses, with one operating table and a small medicine cupboard. All year round, the health workers at the Center provide outpatient and mobile services. No matter how rotten the weather is or how far the patient's house is, we will go anytime and anywhere we are needed.

One night, when I was running a high fever and had gone to bed, a Hui mute rushed into my house, almost out of breath. Gesturing frantically, he made me understand that his wife was in labor and having difficulty. I hurried the five li with him to his home. After several hours of emergency treatment, both the mother and child came through the delivery well. But I got myocarditis and had to be hospitalized. Worried and upset, the Hui couple came to see me with a lot of expensive tonic. I was touched by this gesture of friendship. Now, whenever we call at a villager's house, the whole family treats us like their intimate friends and brings us sweet longan juice or stuffed mutton buns. It makes us know our work is worthwhile.

My husband is the physician-in-charge in the county hospital. We often discuss medical cases together. When I am out making my rounds in the villages he and our children do all the household chores and eat in the hospital's dining room. I am approaching 50, and had my gallbladder removed not too long ago, but I'm still available anytime on call. I'm using all my skills in training young doctors and promoting public health work. From my experience here, I know that scientific knowledge can defeat superstitious beliefs and conventional ideas. We have tried to live up to the people's expectations of a better life and they appreciate our sincerity, but we will have to work still harder to bring about the fundamental changes needed in this backward area.





Wang KaiHua

## GIVING HOPE TO CANCER PATIENTS

by He Bi

"I've not regretted the path I've chosen," said the woman professor Wang KaiHua. Unlike others who became famous at 20 or 30, Wang did not start to show her talents until she was forty. In 1977, she was invited to work with the national gastric cancer research department. By 1983, Wang had not only published many respected papers but she had also established laboratories for gastric cancer research at two universities. After coming to Xiamen University in 1982, Wang set up an anti-cancer research center and became deputy director.

Wang Kaihua's career proceeded as a series of hurdles cleared. When she and her colleagues made outstanding achievements at the Shandong Teachers' University, people became jealous and tried to stand in Wang's way. Her paper was rejected and funds for her research were withheld. While Wang appealed her case to higher authorities, the research in her laboratory never stopped.

After pooling support and encouragement from her associates, Wang's achievements were finally recognized and the attention of the authorities was aroused. As the press reported the work of this outstanding woman scientist, Wang was already studying and outlining her next project. At a meeting in Beijing in 1982, she received both approval and financial support for her proposal to set up an anti-cancer center. Wang was to be responsible for setting up the center and her first job was to look for professional staff and

purchase a substantial amount of equipment. She even had to find the land on which to construct the center. She encountered numerous difficulties during the project and she suffered ridicule especially when problems cropped up. But her colleagues were impressed by her determination to continue her work head on. Once after the completion of the project, she spoke frankly, "One can never expect to receive only praise. But you will accomplish nothing if you allow criticism to interfere with your work." Once however, during a particularly low point of the project, she did waver. At that time her relatives were urging her to join her husband and son in the United States. But after considering her options, she decided it was her duty to stay in China and make contributions to the medical field. Wang told her relatives: I've set my goal even though I might not reach it. However, I will never regret even being only a small pebble on the road I am taking.

### Determination

Although certain cancers can be controlled and cured, it is still considered to be an incurable disease. A person who has the courage to challenge such diseases must possess a strong will.

Wang knew that much research in China has brought international attention, but theory must be applied. Certain cancer can be cured if it is detected at an earlier stage. With cooperation from her colleagues, Wang began conducting cancer screening in some provinces and cities. Many cases of cancer were discovered at an early stage. Wang also suggested that the local government take more effective anti-pollution measures. In order to detect early stage cancer, she introduced the Western technique of photo-dynamic technology, McAb and other immunology methods so that the patient can build an immunity to the disease and some tumors can be detected in their early stage. This method has received fairly good results.

To Wang, cancer is not only a medical problem, but also a social problem. Faced with the limited facilities in China, a hospital cannot usually accept a cancer patient for long-term care. As a result, family members must request leave from work to care for the patient, and go from place to place in search of doctors and medicine. Often the patient fails to cooperate with the doctor because of fear. In the early 1980s Wang undertook to solve

this problem. She felt that the establishment of an institution for care and treatment of cancer patients would relieve many patients and take the strain off hospitals. But in order to establish such a facility, money and medical workers were needed. When at last the facility was set up, Wang only had a few dozen people working with her. She sought help from institutes and hospitals throughout the country offering to employ medical personnel and experts on a contract basis. The Beijing Ritan Hospital, the nation's largest hospital specializing in tumors responded to her request for cooperation. In 1983, Wang was invited to participate in the 8th International Cytology Conference in the United States, where her paper on the cells of stomach cancer won praise. She also received technical support from a large number of foreign experts, and introduced advanced laser equipment and some biotechnical instruments to China. Wang started planning to make Xiamen into a small science city. According to her plan, experts would be invited to come to work and do research. When the news about the new science city spread, many people came to add their names to the list. Wang's assistants respected her because she turned many difficult and illusory hopes into reality.

## Struggling On

Wang usually works 16 or 17 hours a day, and she seldom rests on Sundays and holidays. One of her friends calculated that if Wang worked 8 hours a day, she was already over one hundred years old. They persuaded her to take more rest, but Wang said, "I get sick if I take a long rest."

Apart from praises, Wang is sometimes criticized for her quick temper and straightforwardness. "I can't forgive carelessness because in this work it affects people's lives." Then she added, "My workload is too heavy to waste long hours persuading people to correct their mistakes."

At home Wang never disciplines her two sons through lectures. "It doesn't mean that I don't care for them. Children get the best education through the example of their parents," said Wang. She taught them to do household work and to become independent in everyday life in their early childhood.

In 1985, Wang attended a conference in the United States and it ended at the time of the Spring Festival. Instead of visiting her

relatives in San Francisco, she came back to China.

Wang's elder son went to the United States after graduating from the Central Conservatory of Music and became a violinist. Wang and her son don't often see each other, but they maintain a good relationship. Wang's husband is now working at a university in the United States. She and her husband are devoted to each other and mutually supportive of their careers.



## ZHENG XIAOYING— CHINA'S TOP WOMAN CONDUCTOR

by Cheng Jingjing

The lights in the theatre dim gradually and soon the curtain will rise for the full-length opera *Ayiguli*. Sounds of percussion can be heard from the orchestra pit—this is the musicians' way of welcoming their conductor.

A slim elegant woman wearing a dark green dress comes on to the podium. Soon the entire theatre is under the spell of her conducting as a lovely melody soars through the air, its power tempered by gentleness. This is Zheng Xiaoying—China's top, and also her first, woman conductor, now leading the orchestra of the Central Opera Theatre.

Zheng Xiaoying's name is very familiar to Chinese audiences, for her career has been a story of extraordinary achievements gained through long years of consistent and exacting hard work. A music lover from childhood, she began to learn to play the piano at six and performed the works of Beethoven and Chopin in public at the age of 14. When she was 10, she and her younger sister appeared in a joint recital, dancing and playing instruments to raise money in support of the country's war effort against the Japanese invaders. They sent the money they had raised to the late Mr. Zou Taofen, who was then in charge of the progressive Life Bookstore in Chongqing, to support the magazine *Life at the Front* published by Mr. Zou for commanders and soldiers at the front. Not long afterwards, the two sisters received a letter of thanks written by Mr. Zou himself. Mr. Zou commended them upon their patriotism and printed in the magazine their letter explaining the purpose of their cash donation.

Ironically, Zheng Xiaoying had never thought of making music her career. Hoping to become a doctor, she was admitted to Jinling Girls' College in Nanjing. By that time China had won the war of resistance against Japan, but the Kuomintang reactionaries had taken the opportunity to provoke an all-out civil war in China. Under the influence of progressive students, she came to accept revolutionary ideas and joined the students' amateur chorus. Moved to indignation by the events of the time, they sang militant revolutionary songs in schools, parks and streets.

In 1948, Zheng Xiaoying resolutely gave up her studies in the college's medical department and went to the Communist-led liberated areas to start a new life.

For the following four years, she worked in a song and dance troupe. Apart from singing, she also taught the theory of music. She had never learned how to conduct but, when she was needed, she tried her best to learn and acted as conductor for the chorus. She progressed from this to conducting the orchestra when it accompanied operettas. She could turn her hand to everything—beating a drum or striking a gong where necessary or even playing the trombone.

In 1952, Zheng Xiaoying, at the age of 23, was chosen to study in the Central Conservatory of Music. She majored first in composing and then in conducting. She was so talented and hardworking that she was sent to study in the Moscow National Conservatory. She did exceedingly well there and made an impressive debut by conducting the Italian operas *La Tosca* and *La Traviata*.

After she returned, she taught in the department of conducting at the Central Conservatory of Music while doubling up as a conductor for the Central Opera and Dance Drama theatre. One of her first challenges on returning to China was to conduct symphonies by Beethoven and Tchaikovsky and she distinguished herself in these performances. Cognoscenti in Chinese musical circles praised her conducting as precise, exquisite and full of feeling. Full recognition came when she succeeded in conducting the opera *Ayiguli*, and from then on she has been regarded as an outstanding and very talented conductor.

Conductors must have great musical ability and a strong physique. Thus in the past, conducting used to be considered exclusively a male profession. But through diligent study, Zheng Xiaoying finally became China's top female orchestral conductor and is well-respected in the music world. Her example proves that the determining factor for successful conducting is no longer the sex of the conductor—what count now are diligence and talent.

A conductor's relationship with an orchestra is rather like that of the goose at the head of a pack of wild geese. When Zheng Xiaoying began serving as the principal conductor in

# 中国妇女 WOMEN OF CHINA 中国妇女

the Central Opera Theatre in 1977, the orchestra had just been re-established and most of the musicians were young and inexperienced. Their inadequate playing techniques and orchestral skills presented problems, but she was confident they could be overcome and worked harder than ever to prove this. She first checked the musicians' professional level individually so that she could gain some idea of each one's ability and aptitude. Then she divided them into small groups to play duets, trios or quartets to improve the quality of their performance as a team. She also worked out a training program for the orchestra and gave lectures on musical theory.

She sets strict standards in rehearsals and places great demands on her musicians. To this end she indicates the slightest of faults immediately. Once, during a rehearsal of a Spanish capriccio, she had to stop and go back several times because one particular musician had not entirely mastered the rhythm. But she didn't blame him, just instructing him patiently and encouraging him to try again and again until he'd grasped the rhythm successfully. Her musicians genuinely respect and care for her. One said, "Whenever our conductor raises her baton, we seem to obtain strength from her reassuring glances and her precise and smooth gestures. Our confidence is so great that we feel as if we were not playing a well-known symphony but engaged in creating something new under the baton of our conductor."

Zheng Xiaoying is affable and an easy person with whom to get along. She cares for each of the musicians, chats with them, and takes them out to see performances by other musicians. Sometimes she spends her holidays going on outings with them. If one of them falls ill, she brings along some fruit or cakes and calls on them. The musicians love their woman conductor dearly and willingly consult her when problems crop up. It is this sense of unity and closeness between them that helps them cooperate well and go on to ever greater achievements.

Under her conducting, the orchestra of the Central Opera Theatre has had a number of successes in recent years, playing the accompaniment for the Italian opera *La Traviata*, and performing the Japanese opera *Yuzuru* and the dance drama *The Match Girl*. They also play complete works by world-famous composers.

When the opera *Ayiguli* was staged in the southern border town of Shenzhen, it caused a sensation throughout Hongkong and Macao. Critics from music circles there said that Zheng Xiaoying with her baton had the air of a "senior general." It's a sure bet that in the future the "general" will continue to guide her contingents of players to still greater successes.





Zhao Xiaomo

## THOUGHTS ON PAINTING

by Zhao Xiaomo

It is a great pleasure to experiment in the world of art. Creation is always delightful to me.

Once someone said to me creating can sometimes be very hard. He had difficulty thinking of ways of expressing himself with his brush. I told him not to worry. He could only benefit if he waited for inspiration. When it came, he would be able to paint in the best way. Of course, I was joking, but I do believe in inspiration. It is not supernatural, but rather the accumulation of experience in life. Subconscious learning can suddenly emerge in inspiration. My best works have been done under such circumstances.

Artistic creation is the fruit of emotion. A good painting requires skill and technique, but more important is a reflection of the artist's feelings and character. Absolute objectivism is simply reproduction, not expression. A painting must express the artist's intentions and feelings. I have gradually realized these

truths after long years of study and practice. During my school days, I enjoyed sketching. The works of world masters were sacred to me. Once I came across a collection of Menzel's reprints. I wanted to copy them, but my hands were too clumsy. I never succeeded.

Then I entered the secondary school affiliated with the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. I worked hard, hoping soon to comprehend the shape of the human body, the structure of painting, the exactness of sketching, the compactness of perspective, balance of composition, and harmony of color. How I longed to make the sketch perfect. But my pencil refused to obey. I could never manage to draw fine, straight lines. I only had time to do several sketches before I was swept away by the mighty current of the times, of people being displaced to the mountains and the countryside. I settled down in the Great Northern Wilderness in northeast China.

Like millions of people my age, I witnessed countless hardships. Sweat poured down our faces to wet the soil. But I never gave up painting in my spare time. My first painting was an oil, *Fertile Soil*. Oil painting, I thought, was the greatest of the fine arts, and I wished to translate into action my dream of equalling the world's master oil painters.

Although my school days were short, my teachers had given me the courage to paint. However, facilities were very limited, so I followed some of my colleagues to take up the woodcut knife. Although I knew next to nothing about woodcuts, my childish works vividly expressed my true feelings.

The nation was reviving after the downfall of the gang of four. Soon the great turning point in my life came. In 1978 I was admitted as a graduate student into the woodcut department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts. At long last, after a lapse of ten years, I was pursuing art.

I systematically studied woodcut techniques, and met many people in art circles. As a result, my perspective widened. Things that I had once treasured lost their value; things that I had neglected before began to show their charm. At first I lay too much emphasis on the technical side, but then I realized that technical improvement was not necessarily synonymous with artistic attainment. When I broke away from the fervent pursuit of technique, I was able to appreciate the real value of

art. Chinese peasant paintings are unique in form and bold in execution. They are free from academic rules and can paint with exaggeration and variation. Their works are simple, emotional, and innocent. In a word, they possess strong artistic appeal. I was ready to learn from peasant artists.

Chinese folk art is a huge treasure-house. It carries on the tradition of oriental art, and expresses modern ideas. Humans share common feelings and artistic language. Modern masters of Western countries, such as Picasso, Matisse and Gauguin, deftly blended oriental influences into classical creations.

Creativity depends on an artist's training and accomplishment, as well as her or his world outlook and feelings. I often fell into reverie, searching for the best way to express myself. My first works were intuitive and impromptu, and therefore they were childish and bore the marks of copying. I wanted to establish a style of my own, but I had set my target high, and it was hard to attain.

Upon graduation from art college, I worked in the studio of the People's Arts Publishing House. Here the artists expressed their creativity in many forms. Under their influence, my style began to change. I did a number of woodcuts during visits to the Yimeng Mountains in Shandong Province. In describing the local scenes and customs, I introduced folk woodcutting and papercutting skills expressing the motifs in a realistic way but with a free hand style. In this way, my works are done from inspiration.

But people had different reactions to my paintings. Some of my classmates from secondary school and close friends from the Great Northern Wilderness told me that they did not understand what I was trying to convey. They said that I was doing badly. I was quite at a loss. But I persevered. I did not want to continue to simply imitate the works of past masters. I had to find a way to create something new. The world is complex and varied and so is artistic style and technique. Modern art requires an updating of old conceptions. Art changes just as society changes.

I was filled with feelings of uncertainty when I presented my most recent works to my audience. The works are somewhere between woodcut and painting. They attracted great interest at an exhibition of works by ten women artists.

What I had done was quite simple. But it had never been tried by anyone else. Perhaps it was because my eyes had caught the beauty of the technique.

I was pleased, but I felt instantly that something was missing. The search for a new form and the updating of technique are not the sole purposes of art. They are only the means, the key to a new realm. I was afraid to stop at a novel but superficial result. I wanted to present my deeper emotion to my audience.

Art is by no means mysterious, instead it is simple and illustrative. Different artistic forms all carry their own profound meaning. Art is an exchange of intelligence and wit between artist and audience. In short, an artist must work with her heart and soul to attain the highest levels. This is my lifelong aim.

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Li Lanying

## A WOMAN PHOTOGRAPHER

by Wang De

Working over the past thirty years with her camera, Li Lanying, now nearly fifty, is the first woman staff photographer for *China Pictorial*, a monthly magazine circulated throughout China and in many other countries.

Li Lanying is from a conservative family in Beijing where girls were taught to be quite delicate and well-versed in etiquette and traditional values. But Li rebelled against being kept at home. Full of vigor, she studied hard, and was determined to have a career the same as a man. Her parents finally had to give in to their headstrong daughter's wishes.

In primary school, Li Lanying was inclined toward music and art. She sketched, made paper kites and cut seals, which drew the attention of her art teachers. Later, she became interested in photography, and while studying at college, would often take snapshots of her schoolmates although she never considered

taking up photography as a profession.

During the '40s, when Li was in secondary school, she became acquainted with progressive teachers and students, and accepted the idea of founding a new China through revolution. In early 1949, Beijing was liberated, but the war to overthrow the Chiang Kai-Shek reactionary regime and liberate China was still being waged in many other parts of the country. Li Lanying joined the revolutionary ranks and went south as a member of a cultural and art troupe.

In the early fifties when China began its economic reconstruction, Li Lanying was asked to join the staff of the magazine *China Pictorial* in Beijing where she was given every opportunity to improve her photographic skill and where her colleagues encouraged her in her profession. Senior photographers were especially helpful, telling her their experience over the years. Li Lanying carried out her assignments well. She photographed women embroiderers in factories, busy night scenes at the Yellow River Bridge work-site, rural life, mural paintings in Han Dynasty tombs, landscapes, flowers, plants, children and stage art. She matured professionally through hard work and varied experience in life.

Beginning from 1957, Li Lanying concentrated on depicting stage art. She read literary and art books and periodicals, participated in art forums, visited theatrical companies, song and dance ensembles and orchestras, and made friends with the artists and musicians. Li became acquainted with not only stage life, but also their home and personal life. Keen observation and study enabled this woman photographer to grasp in an instant an artist's characteristic gesture and expression.

Li often made several visits to photograph one play, her husband or secondary school student son helping her carry the equipment to and from the theater. Husband and son would watch the performances while Li was busy with her camera. And this often went on night after night.

Many eager photographers have taken pictures of the popular folk singer Guo Lanying. The singer's favorite, however, is a photograph by Li Lanying. It shows Guo finishing a song. Her lips are closing, as she leans slightly forward, about to leave the stage. Li took the picture only after carefully watching the singer perform and analyzing her artistic presentation.

# 中国妇女 WOMEN OF CHINA 中国妇女

Li Lanying has done excellent portrayals of stage dancers, her photographs being outstanding not only for technical originality and creativeness. There is a poetic mood that appeals to viewer's aesthetic sense. Her photograph entitled *Melody* displayed at the First Asian Photographic Exhibition shows the well-known British ballerina Manola Asensio during her visit to China. She is caught with arms outstretched, dancing in a white fluffy skirt like a swan against the dark backdrop. Her eyes look appealing and harmonize well with the rhythm of her body lines. The picture almost suggests the musical accompaniment of the dance.

Another of Li's works, *The Painter in His Studio*, was awarded third prize at the Sixth Asian and Oceanic Photographic Contest, and *The Summer Palace in Rain* won second prize at the Sino-Japanese Photographic Competition. Today, Li Lanying is compiling her art experience into a book. But she will not stop there. She is exploring new ways and new ideas in photographic art.

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## AN EXPERT GRASS-GROWER

by Xiao Ming

Originally a native of Shanghai, Wang Suxiang, now 60, shows none of the signs of her early urban life. Her face is dark and weathered from 30 years of hard work in the hills of the Northwest. The mountain village she lives in, Shenjiashan, is located in one of China's most barren areas, the arid land of Tongwei County, Gansu Province. Small and uncultivable, Shenjiashan is not known even by people from its own province. But just recently Shenjiashan made the front page of the nation's leading newspaper, the *People's Daily*, in a news story on its recent notable achievements. In the past, Shenjiashan was an area of desolate loess hills, but it now boasts of a prosperous grass-covered stock farm with many flocks of cattle and sheep; peasants have money in their pockets and grain to eat. How Shenjiashan found this new prosperity is best told through the life story of woman stock raiser Wang Suxiang.

While still in her teens, the war against the Japanese invasion forced Wang to leave Shanghai along with her school and go to the inland city of Chongqing in Sichuan Province. By the time the war ended in 1945, Wang was homeless, her father had been killed in an air raid. She was reluctant to return to Shanghai, so she traveled to the Northwest where she thought it would be more peaceful.

Wang's desire to reconstruct the land motivated her to enter the Northwest Livestock and Veterinary Institute where she majored in animal husbandry. Unfortunately, she was expelled by the school authority for her political activities promoting progressive ideas. When China was liberated in 1949, she resumed her studies but two years later she had to leave school again to have baby. Wang finally finished her university course in 1954.

Soon after graduation, Wang Suxiang set to work. On several different trips with work teams, she explored the arid mountain areas in central Gansu in order to determine the level of development in the more remote areas. Wang found the people in Shenjiashan short of food and clothes, and illiterate. When Wang and the work team arrived, the people at the village hoped that the days of terrible poverty were over.

The presence of a young female college graduate aroused considerable interest. Wang was welcomed at the house of an old Tibetan woman. Despite the harsh and backward conditions, Wang worked hard to earn the villagers' trust. During the day, Wang reclaimed the sand waste and cultivated pastureland along with the peasants. At night, she slept on an old brick bed with the Tibetan woman. The peasants soon looked upon Wang as one of the family.

But the economic development of Shenjiashan was not without its problems. Although the peasants' living conditions did improve, one of the early policies allowed them only to reclaim the barren hills for growing grain rather than rotating it for pastureland as well. Under this policy, the soil became seriously eroded and the overworked land only produced about 80 catties per *mu*. With such miserable yields more grassland had to be reclaimed, causing even greater soil erosion and an ecological imbalance. Year after year, the villagers had to depend chiefly on relief provisions from the state in order to maintain a minimum standard of living. So the peasants still remained in poverty for almost 30 years after liberation. Wang was only an ordinary member of the work team, and powerless to do anything about what she knew to be bad policies, her efforts to change the situation proved to be in vain. The situation remained the same until 1978 when new economic policies were initiated at the national level.

By this time, Wang was 55, and was living in the provincial capital of Lanzhou with her family. With the policy that supports the work of technical experts in modernizing China, she could very well have stayed in Lanzhou to do research work. She could also have chosen to retire into an easy life. But Wang was determined to serve the people in Shenjiashan that she had come to love with what she believed to be the right approach but never got the chance to put into effect. Without any hesitation, Wang left her family for Shenjiashan, some 200 kms. away from Lanzhou.

What Wang found upon her return was a rural production team of 28 households, 154 people in all, owning a plentiful 9 *mu* per capita. Although the land was vast, only a small part of it was pastureland, just enough for few cattle and sheep to graze on. Most of

the people there were still working laboriously to reclaim low-yield sand waste for the production of grain. At first Wang thought that growing trees would be a solution but the seven or eight years it would take proved to be too long. So finally, Wang decided to grow sainfoin, a pink-flowered leguminous herb that thrives in dry soil and chilly weather. With the pastures extended, Wang planned to expand the animal husbandry and promote forestation and agriculture. Convinced of her plan, the villagers used a tractor to reclaim 200 *mu* of land for pasture. The grass grew rapidly and soon stretched into a large expanse of grassland. That year, cattle and sheep in Shenjiashan were treated to grass one month earlier than usual. The grass remained green until the beginning of winter. The peasants were extremely happy. "All those years the wheat didn't grow and now we have grass in a matter of months!"

In 1979, Shenjiashan harvested 50,000 catties of the fodder grass, enough to last through the winter, and successfully kept soil erosion in check. The experiment gave Wang the opportunity to teach the peasants the advantages of planting this type of grass and to show them how to grow it. Convinced by the success of the experiment, one by one the peasants all started to grow grass. From 1980 to 1982, the team grew sainfoin on 1,000 *mu* of land.

With so much grassland, the peasants started to raise livestock. In the winter of 1980, Wang traveled 400 kms. in a truck to buy some fine-breed sheep for Shenjiashan. On the way back, she got caught in a blizzard. Afraid that the lambs might get sick, Wang and the other villagers with her squeezed themselves between the lambs to protect them from the wind. By the time they reached Shenjiashan, Wang was covered with snow. The whole village was grateful to Wang once again. After three years of hard work, the team's sheep increased from 77 in 1979 to 180, and its cattle from 29 to 54.

Along with the production of grass, cattle, and manure, rotating the growing of grass and grain also increased the output of grain. But Shenjiashan still must contend with the harsh climate. In 1982 a drought caused a failure of crop yields, but the grass still grew well. By selling grass seeds and livestock products, the village earned an income of 5,000 yuan. On average, each family got a share of

184 yuan that year. The day the annual accounts were distributed was a real holiday for Shenjiashan. With cash in their hands, old peasants expressed their gratitude, "Teacher Wang has been with us through thick and thin and we are very grateful." Although Shenjiashan has only been planting this new grass and raising cattle for four years, its future looks even more prosperous.

Wang Suxiang knows that she will not be able to live in Shenjiashan forever. Its future must now depend even more on the creativity of the local people. She has been teaching some young people the scientific and technical skills needed to grow sainfoin. Wang also had helped the village set up a literacy class, making it possible to bring science and culture to the inaccessible mountain village.

In the arid mountain region of Gansu Province, Shenjiashan has blazed a trail that Wang hopes others can follow. Traveling along the mountain paths of Tongwei County, she is working arduously to spread the experience of Shenjiashan. Wherever she goes, she leaves behind large stretches of lush grassland, symbolizing the hope Shenjiashan gives to other such villages throughout the county.





Miranda P. Chow

## MARANDA'S LIFE IN MUSIC

by Professor Kuosen Ho

登鶴雀樓

白日依山盡  
黃河入海流  
欲窮千里目  
更上一層樓

"Ascending the Heron Tower"

The sun recedes behind the western mountains  
The Yellow River flows on to the sea  
If you want to see a full thousand miles,  
Climb one more story of this tower.

Wang Zhihuan, (688-748)  
Poet of the Tang Dynasty

When my wife gives voice training and vocal lectures to her students, she selects both bel canto and traditional classic songs, both foreign and Chinese songs. She, *Maranda P. Chow*, is 64 years of age now but her level of energy and vibrant health still prove her youthful strength. She is a coloratura soprano soloist and vocal teacher in the famous Shanghai Philharmonic Society in Shanghai, China, where she has been for more than thirty years.

When journalists visit her in her studio or home, she is reluctant, for reasons of modesty, to describe her life in music. However, if the story of her life in music is sought as an example of women's creative accomplishments, then she is very willing to talk to you about herself, as her case may be typical.

As a child I loved the many busy activities of my life at home and school: musical and physical exercise and mathematics. Professor Chia Yuanbai, a famous educator, was the founder of our Aiguo (patriotism) Girls Middle School in Shanghai. Our teachers promoted the new educational system and we were exposed to a wide variety of activities." Miranda was a short-distance runner and a member of the school basketball team. She was nurtured and influenced by her music teacher, Tsu Monghun,

in Middle School, and later by the choral director of the church choir. She early realized that music was to be her life and that her talent lay there.

During the war with Japan she passed the entrance examination to the National Chungking Conservatory of Music. By that time she had already been involved with many musical activities, both in relation to the war effort and as social events. At the Conservatory, she rose early in the morning and worked until late at night. Morning and night, she performed her vocal and piano exercises. Her parents could not provide financial support for books or instruments. She had to do it herself, using her self-reliance and resourcefulness. She provides evidence that talent and hard work will not go unrecognized nor unrewarded in our country. Her vocal teacher recommended her for the part of Princess Yugen in the Chinese opera, "Herdsmen Suwu." She scored great success in her performance as an opera singer. But she never forgot the lines of Wang Zhihuan:

"If you want to see a full thousand miles,  
Climb one more story of this tower."

She enrolled in a series of music courses at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and graduated with honors.

After her graduation she taught music in a Shanghai Middle School, then transferred to the Shanghai Philharmonic Society, formerly the Eastern China Philharmonic Society, in Shanghai. Her performances were always enthusiastically welcomed whether from the stages of music halls or in factories, on farms, or at military bases. Special favorites were songs as "Singjiang Province is Good and Beautiful!" and "When Cassia Blooms, Fortune Comes" which she sang in China, Korea, Burma, India, Indonesia and Macau to fantastic receptions.

After the "cultural revolution" she recovered her musical life and regained her strength—it was her nature to be energetic and optimistic—although she had been through a terrible time. She sang in the Spring Festival of 1977 after a long absence from the stage during the years of turmoil. Her swift recovery was due to the fundamental soundness of the training and cultivation of her adolescent years. "Now, my second life of music begins!" she said happily to me and to her colleagues.

Since this new beginning she has performed hundreds of recitals. On National Day, 1982, the Shanghai Broadcasting Station and Shanghai TV carried her coloratura perfor-



mances of "Ah, je ris de me voir" (the "Jewel Song" of *Faust* by Gounod), "Quande men vo soletta per la via" ("Through the street" from Puccini's *La Boheme*), and arias from the light opera, *The Merry Widow*. The sustained and tumultuous applause provided recognition and encouragement for an artist who was no longer young.

There are many people hoping to learn classical music from experts such as Maranda. The Shanghai Philharmonic Society established the Shanghai Music School and appointed Maranda principal and vocal teacher, a post she has held for three years. As the number of her students increases and her administrative duties multiply, she also takes on side jobs with the China society of Musicians, the Shanghai Women's Association, and others. She also belongs to the Shanghai Association of Elderly Sportspeople! Busy as she is, she takes time to sing, write, discuss with everyone—young and old, Chinese and foreigners—with enthusiasm. When people

ask her, "How can you do all this and do it so well?" she replies, "My strength comes from the original source of my music—my beloved people and my native land. And I exercise daily, both morning and night: Tai Chi, short races, and of course vocal exercises every day."

After her routines and social activities, she can still arrange time for her family and household chores and can combine these with her professional duties quite well. She likes to read foreign literature and daily newspapers and to discuss them with her husband and sons. She corresponds with her beloved daughter, Lily, who is studying at the California Art Institute in Los Angeles. She feels that she has had a very full and rich musical life. She feels optimistic and prosperous, like the famous Chinese poet Liu Yuxi (772- 842) of the Tang Dynasty:

"Don't say the season is too late  
for mulberry and elm to bloom.  
The evening sky is full of rosy clouds."





## HOW I BECAME A SPORTS MEDICINE SCIENTIST

by Ji Di Chen, M.D.

I became involved with sports medicine when I selected the research proposal for my post graduate thesis. My tutor, Professor Xi Xuan Yu, encouraged me to conduct the research project on "Vitamin C Requirement of Athletes."

Through that research, I realized how important nutrition is in developing sports ability and personal health. After completing my post graduate thesis, I was selected by Professor Mien Yu Qu, pioneer in Chinese sports medicine and director of the Institute of Sports Medicine at the Beijing Medical University, to join his faculty and begin research in sports nutrition and biochemistry.

After only a few years of research, I fell in love with my work. I enjoy my research subjects: they always are full of vitality. I also enjoy my laboratory experiments, the statistical analysis, and writing up my results. Because I love all the work related to research, I decided to devote my lifetime efforts to sports nutrition and biochemistry, an open research area in China.

I am a very self-confident and strong-charactered woman. I resolved to be highly educated when I was a child. I believe that where there is a will there is a way. While I was a freshman student in the Peking Union Medical College, my father decided to move the family from Shanghai to Hong Kong and asked me to join them. I refused to move with the rest of the family and endured the hardships of being alone only because I did not want to discontinue my study in the college.

I married at the age of 28, which is considered late in China. When I began work in the Institute of Sports Medicine, my first son was only three months old. There were actually some contradictions between my dedication to research and the family's life. Since I have a strong will to succeed in my work, I was not always satisfied even when I put all my energy into the work. However, I also had to face practical family life and my responsibilities to it. My husband also is very busy since he is the director of the Environmental Toxicology Department (in the Beijing Medical University), a new and important area of study in China. Because we both have professional responsibilities, we realized that the only way to operate our home was to coordinate our joint efforts very closely. He never complains when I have to work hard and go home late. Sometimes when I have to carry out some experiments or write papers on Sundays, he kindly does the shopping and takes care of the

children. Of course, when he is busy, I take the responsibility of the house work on my own initiative. We share not only the house work and children's care, but also the happiness and worries — in fact, we share everything. I often think that if married people can deal adequately with the relationship of family and work, it will benefit both the family's life and the couple's business. I am proud of my ideal husband, and I enjoy the sincere equality in the family's life. I wish every woman in the world could enjoy a similar situation.

I am so happy to be Chinese and live in the country which we call the "Scientific Spring." Our government pays great attention to people's health and sports; but during the Cultural Revolution, things were confused. The Institute of Sports Medicine was closed. I moved to Gan Su province to work and served as a doctor of internal medicine in a local area hospital for more than three years. I am unable to express how much I missed my research at that period of time. Fortunately, the Institute of Sports Medicine reopened again (after the Cultural Revolution) by Premier Zhou's instruction and because of his concern for sports medicine. I was very delighted to return to my position.

After returning to Beijing (when the Institute reopened) I worked very hard to recover the lost research time. I established the laboratories of sports nutrition and biochemistry, and completed a series of research studies which are considered to be of some practical value. I often try to focus my main attention on research related to athletes' real needs such as adequate methods of weight control, functional evaluation, sports anemia, etc. Through years of effort I gained fruitful results. As a consequence, I was honored and awarded the title "Advanced Researcher of Sports Sciences" in November 1984.

I am very pleased about the current open policies and the enhancement of international exchanges. As a consequence, I have had opportunities to participate in international academic conferences and join study groups going to western Europe. During the last few years, I have visited several countries (Italy, USA, Sweden, Denmark, and Romania). I became my country's representative to the Research Group on Biochemistry of Exercise which is part of the Research Committee of the International Council of Sports and Physical Education at UNESCO.

These appointments and international travels made it possible to refresh my knowledge and

become acquainted with many foreign friends. In turn, many friends from abroad came to visit me in China. The international academic exchanges are both helpful for the progress of Sports Medicine in China and beneficial to international sports events. Besides, they facilitate the friendship between scholars in China and other countries.

I became a scientist not only due to my own efforts, but also because of the very important role my government played in improving the position of women. Guidance from my teacher and senior colleagues and my successful marriage partnership helped too.

After this brief review of my personal experiences, I look forward, full of confidence, to my life and my work. I wish that all the women in the world may enjoy true equality in family life and success in their life, business, and companionships.

*Ji Di Chen, M.D., is associated with the Research Division of Sports Nutrition and Biochemistry at the Institute of Sports Medicine, Beijing Medical University of Beijing, China.*

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*A woman teacher coaches the school's callisthenics group.*

*photo by Li Taihang*



# WOMEN IN CHINA

## An Annotated and Selected Bibliography, Compiled by Catherine Olson

Originally, I had planned to develop an annotated and selected bibliography featuring autobiographies and biographies of Women in China, but through my research, I also found numerous writings from a sociological view point on women in the Chinese society. I prepared the autobiographies and biographies bibliography with an added selected readings list on women in Chinese society; most of these titles were written after the Revolution in 1949, when women were emancipated.

The bibliography also includes two fiction works and one study on the Chinese custom of footbinding. The two fiction works, *Born of the Same Roots*; *Stories of Modern Chinese Women* and *Seven Contemporary Writers*, present remarkable stories of women and their everyday struggles. I included these two works because "literature is the flesh and breath to the bare bones of history" and "fiction reflected mind and soul of society" (*Born of the Same Roots*, edited by Vivian Ling Hsu). These two works related well to the physical, mental, and emotional lives of the numerous Chinese women authors that I have read.

*Chinese Footbinding* by Dr. Howard S. Levy was included because the custom played a vital part in the problem of the position and role of women in China. I believe that a book detailing the origins and history of this ancient custom, which lasted for more than a thousand years, has a definite place in a bibliography on Women in China.

The autobiographies and biographies span the years 495 B.C. to the present time. They include memoirs and observances of American and British women who traveled in China as well as works by Chinese women, and they encompass lives of dowagers, courtesans, educators, concubines and warriors. This bibliography offers a fascinating glimpse into the world of Women in China from before Christ to modern times.

Bland, J.O.P. and E. Backhouse. *China Under The Empress Dowager: Being the History of the Life and Times of Tzu Hsi*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1910.

Compiled from state papers and the private diary of the comptroller of her household. This story is an enthralling narrative of the vicissitudes of feeling and policy in the Forbidden City at the time of the Boxer rising and the attacks on the legations in Peking. It gives an exciting look into the enigmatic character of the Empress Dowager Tzu-Hsi.

*Born of the Same Roots*; *Stories of Modern Chinese Women*; edited by Vivian Ling Hsu. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981.

Translations of nineteen short stories from the May Fourth period, two decades of war and revolution in the 1930s-40s, and post-1949 China. The selections come from a group of Chinese writers, both male and female in the People's Republic of China, Taiwan and other countries. The issues relevant to women's lives in twentieth-century China have been amply and dramatically brought to life in literature by women writers who have a natural propensity to portray themselves and also by male writers who recognized that their own lives are inseparable from those of the women around them, and whose insight into women's problems and psyche are in many cases acutely penetrating. Each selection focuses on the lives of women, who are resilient individuals with a great strength to survive and at times to triumph, despite what seem unreasonable odds.

Chao, Buwei Yang. *Autobiography of a Chinese Woman*, English translation by her husband Yuenren Chao. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1970, (c1947).

Covers a span of 56 years from the author's birth in 1889 in Nanking, in a 128 room house with four generations living there, to V-J Day in 1945 in Greensboro, Vermont. The author gives a colorful description of oriental customs, especially pertaining to funerals, weddings and her own education. She recalls having to study *Women Classic* in which the chief theme was to make a woman know her place of unimportance. However, this unusual woman was lucky to have a liberal grandfather and she grew up to be an unconventional person in a conventional world.

Cooper, Elizabeth. *My Lady of the Chinese Courtyard*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1914.

Compilation of letters written by Kwei-li, the wife of a very highly placed Chinese official, to her husband when he accompanied his master, Prince Chung, on a trip around the world. Probably late 1800s. Kwei-li was the daughter of a viceroy of Chih-li, a man most advanced for his time and one of the founders of the educational movement in China.

Crawford, Martha F. *The Chinese Bride: A Story of Real Life*. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, nd.

Story of Sue May Lee gives a vivid picture of what life for a well-to-do Chinese girl was like in the 1800s. Sue May's feet were bound at the age of five and matrimonial arrangements were made for her the same year. She in turn marries and becomes a slave to her mother-in-law. Later Sue May is introduced to the Christian faith and becomes a Christian.

Cusack, Dymphna. *Chinese Women Speak*. London. Agness and Robertson, Ltd. 1959.

Personal narrative of the author's travel in China in the late 1950s with vivid descriptions of women she met during her travels. She characterizes Chinese women involved in a great socialist movement and fighting successfully against the influence of 2500 years of eminent suppression. Her sketches range from the Empress Dowager's Lady-in-Waiting to Shu-fing, an ex-concubine.

Ekelund, Karl. *My Chinese Wife*. New York: Doubleday, 1945.

The author is a young Danish newspaper correspondent who falls in love with a beautiful Chinese girl in Peking. The story interprets the customs and culture of the Chinese race to the people of the author's race.

Franking, Mae T. *My Chinese Marriage*. New York: Duffield and Company, 1922.

Personal account of an American woman's life in China, her struggles to adapt to the Chinese strict social code in Shanghai, the acceptance by her in-laws of the marriage, and her stay with her Chinese mother-in-law.

Hahn, Emily. *The Soong Sisters*. New York: Doubleday, Daran and Company, 1941.

Story of the lives of three famous Chinese women, Mme Sun Yat-sen, widow of the father of the Chinese revolution; Mme Kung, wife of China's financial wizard; and Mme Chiang Kai-shek, wife of the Generalissimo. The book begins with the story of Charlie Soong, the sisters' father, his associations with America and his friendship and collaboration with Sun Yat-sen. The book relates informally the story of the Chinese revolution, the organization of the Republic of China and the parts played by various members of the family.

Han Suyin. *Birdless Summer; China; Autobiography, History*. New York: G.P. Putnam, 1969.

A continuation of the author's autobiography which began with *The Crippled Tree* and *A Mortal Flower*. This spans the years 1938 to 1949 when she returned from medical studies in Europe to Japanese-occupied China. The book describes Chin's struggle with the new society and move toward Communism. The author also relates her marriage to a British Army officer ambitious for his place in Chiang Kai-shek's government. Suyin Han accounts for the course of events that leads her back to Europe where she becomes a doctor and a writer.

Han Suyin. *The Crippled Tree: China, Biography, History, Autobiography*. New York: G.P. Putnam, 1965.

An autobiography of the authors' early years to 1928. Born to a European mother and a Chinese father, the author describes the tension of her family life and the collapse of Chinese society. A neverending struggle to resolve the conflict between widely divergent elements in her own background reflects the same conflict which China itself faces between an ancient Eastern tradition and the sudden confrontation of modern western civilization. This historical description explains why China was so ripe for a revolution.

Han Suyin. *A Mortal Flower: China, Autobiography, History*. New York: G.P. Putnam, 1966.

Second installment of the author's biography covers the years 1928 to 1938. A continuation of the author's coming to grips with her Chinese/European parentage and cultural clash. Her determination to study medicine led her to Yin Chin University, to Brussels and later to London. The historical portion discusses the split between the Kuomintang and the communists and the Japanese invasion of China.

Hibbert, Eloise Talcott. *Embroidered Gauze: Portraits of Famous Chinese Ladies*. New York: Dutton, 1938.

Recreates the stories of eleven Chinese historical women who as wives, concubines, courtesans or empresses achieved supreme power and left the mark of their personalities upon their times. These life stories cover a span of 2,500 years of Chinese history.

Hsieh, Ping-ying. *Girl Rebel: Autobiography; With Extracts from Her New War diaries*; translated by Adet & Anov Lin; with an introduction by Lin Yutang. New York: John Day Company, 1940.

The author of this autobiography is a young Chinese woman who before she was twenty rebelled against the old customs—against footbinding arranged marriage, virtual imprisonment in the home and all the feudalistic conventions of her generation. Hsieh was born in warlike Hunan in 1910 to an old liberal scholar and a domineering, conservative mother. To avoid a prearranged marriage she joined the northern forces in the Kuomintang revolution in 1927. This book contains a translation of her autobiography and the New War Diary which she began at Shanghai. At the time of printing she was in active service at the Hupeh front.

Kingston, Maxine Hong. *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*. New York: Knopf, 1976.

The author is a Chinese-American born in California during World War II to recent immigrants. As a young girl she was haunted by two sets of ghosts. The first were ancestral figures from Chinese village life handed down in cautionary tales by her mother. The second set were the white American ghosts: Policemen Ghosts, Social Work Ghosts, Garbage Ghosts, Wino Ghosts—the patterns of the West.

Levy, Howard. *Chinese Footbinding: The History of a Curious Erotic Custom*. New York: Walton Rawls, 1966.

A study of the origins and history of Chinese footbinding. The author has done significant work in uncovering detailed descriptions of this ancient custom by young ladies who had their feet bound. Older women describe the painful operation of freeing their feet after many years of binding.

*Lives: Chinese Working Women*. Edited by Mary Sheridan and Janet W. Salaff. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

Through the use of life histories which are autobiographical or biographical in nature reported through oral and written documentation, the authors present older women whose lives were rooted in China before 1949, lives of younger women in Taiwan and Hong Kong, and lives of women of China in revolution and reconstruction.

Llewellyn, Bernard. *China's Courts and Concubines*. London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. 1956.

Fourteen sketches of men and women in Chinese history. These fourteen lives are not a representative cross section of men and women who have figured in China's past, but rather they are people who interested the author.

Moredeed, Hasna Jasinsuddin. *Women in China*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1980.

A personal account of the author's experience and the women she met as she traveled throughout China in 1978.

Nan-Hua, Chen, pseud of Zen, Mes Heng - Che (Ch'en) *Autobiography of a Chinese Young Girl*. No publication information.

The author describes her chief purposes of this volume: "to furnish China's friends with some reading matter which could at least claim to be genuine and sincere and to beg the world to listen to those Chinese who are trying to change the Chinese cultural & social attitudes." She discusses footbinding, her immediate family, her education, her attendance at the medical school for girls, her travels in China, and her life as a teacher.

Ning, Lao T'ai-t'ai. *A Daughter of Han: The Autobiography of a Chinese Working Woman*, by Ida Pruitt, from the story told by Ning Lao T'ai-t'ai. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1967 (c1945).

An intimate story of a working woman and her day to day struggles against forces of economic pressure. The author tells the story in a manner which gives a sense of the Chinese acceptance of poverty, war and diseases and an understanding of the effort it would take to change that acceptance.

O'Hara, Albert Richard. *The Position of Women in Early China: According to Lieh Nu Chuman's The Biographies of Chinese Women*. Taipei, Taiwan: Mei Ya Publications, 1971.

A translation of *The Biographies of Chinese Women* that provides a wealth of material on early Chinese culture, Chinese society and family life. This was originally compiled by Liu Hsiang of the Han Dynasty 80-90 B.C.



Pruitt, Ida. *Old Madam Yin: A Memoir of Peking Life, 1929-38*. Stanford California: Stanford University Press, 1979.

A personal account of the day-to-day events of the old multifamily household, its attitudes, indulgences and delights are all described to make the reader understand that vanished era.

Sansan. *Eighth Moon: The True Story of a Young Girl's Life in Communist China*: by Sansan as told to Bette Lord. New York: Harper and Row, 1964.

The story of a small girl who was left behind in China after her family accepts an assignment in the United States in 1946. The communist revolution made this situation permanent and Sansan is raised by foster parents. She describes the hardships and disappointments over the years as she becomes almost a slave to her adopted family. She details how future success in school depends upon political acceptability. Volunteer labor on farms, smelting scrap iron, and spending hours in line for rationed food were all part of her tedious life under totalitarian rule. In 1962, Sansan was reunited with her family in the United States.

Snow, Helen Foster. *My China Years: A Memoir*. New York: William Morrow, 1984.

"The Reminiscences of an Extraordinary Woman who Observed Firsthand the Revolutionary Birth of a Modern Nation". The memoirs of a remarkable woman who arrived in Shanghai in 1931 to be a clerk in the American Consulate General. The author describes her romance and marriage to Edgar Snow, their life in Peking and her travels to Yanan to meet Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai and their comrades-in-arms after the Long March. She lived among them for four months and returned to Peking with material to write her classic *Inside Red China*. She, along with her husband and Rewi Alley, founded the system of industrial cooperatives that spread throughout China and India. Her story ends with her return to America in 1940.

Spence, Jonathan D. *The Death of Woman Wang*. New York: Viking Press, 1978.

The setting is in T'an-Ch'eng in the province of Shantung between 1668-1672. This book tells the stories of four crises that happen to farmers, farm-workers, and their wives who had no connections to help them in time of trouble or any organization to lean up on. It frequently shows the dilemma of Chinese women caught between the ideal behavior and the struggle of rural life.

Swann, Nancy Lee. *Pan Chao: Foremost Woman Scholar of China*. New York: The Century Company, 1932.

Relates the background, ancestry, life and courtings of the most celebrated Chinese woman of letters, Pan Chao, Ts'ao Ta-ku of the court of the Eastern Han Empress Ho (89-105 A.D.). This is a scholarly written text that unveils the talents of this remarkable woman who was chosen to occupy the post of historian to the Imperial Court of China. Pan Chao was also teacher to the young empress and her ladies-in-waiting. This study incorporates her writings, poetry and philosophy.

Vare, Danielle. *The Last Empress*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Daran and Company, 1938.

The biography of Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi who held the fate of China in her hands for more than a half a century. It tells her achievements and her failures: how she lost all because, although she knew her own people, Tzu Hsi knew nothing of the barbarians who lived beyond the four seas. Her last words were, "Never again allow a woman to hold the supreme power in the state. It is against the house law of our dynasty and should be forbidden. Be careful not to allow eunuchs to meddle in government matters. The Ming dynasty was brought to ruin by eunuchs and its fate should be a warning to my people."

Wicke, Roxane. *Comrade Chiang Ch'ing*. Boston, Massachusetts: Little Brown and Company, 1977.

A biography of Chiang Ch'ing, Mao Tse-tung's fourth wife which spans the years from Chiangs' torturous childhood to her overthrow as doyenne of proletarian culture. In a series of interviews with the author, Chiang describes the violent images of her youth; the perilous times of warlordism and imperialism; her life as an actress and political worker in Shanghai; her role in the Cultural Revolution; her marriage to a supreme leader; and finally the unabashed pursuit of power in her own right which led to her imprisonment in October 1976. "Sex is engaging in the first rounds, but what sustains interest in the long run is power." . . . Comrade Chiang Ch'ing.

Wong, Su-Ling and Cressy, Earl Herbert. *Daughter of Confucius: A personal history*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1952.

A narrative that is the intimate story of a girl growing up in a Chinese household of fifty-one persons which is ruled by the punctilio of the Confucian code. A very unusual and informative autobiography. Names of persons and places were changed to protect the writer's privacy.

Wu Shu-Chiung (Mrs. Wu Lien-teh). *Chao Chun: Beauty in Exile*. Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, Ltd. 1934.

Story of Chao Chun, born in the twenty-first year of the reign of Hsian Ti, delicately nurtured in the sheltered seclusion of her parental home. Later she was obliged to marry a Tartar Chieftain and pass fifty years of her life beyond the confines of her native land. Despite her uprooted existence she remained devoted to the country of her birth.

Wu Shu Chiung (Mrs. Wu Lien-Leh). *Hsi Shih: Beauty of Beauties, A Romance of Ancient China*. (About 495-472 B.C.) Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, Ltd. 1931.

Story of Hsi Shih, a remarkable woman who played an important part of the history of the kingdoms of Wu and Yueh. This is an outstanding example of a woman's beauty swaying the destiny of nations.

Wu Shu Chiung (Mrs. Wu Lien-Leh). *The Most Famous Beauty of China.: The Story of Yang Kuei-fei*. New York: S. Appleton, 1924.

Yang Kuei-fei lived in the time of the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618-905) and for twenty years was the undisputed mistress of the imperial court. Her talents as a musician, singer and dancer were unsurpassed. The author vividly describes the elegance of court in China during the eighth century when the Tang dynasty was at the height of its prosperity.

Zhijuan, Ru et al. *Seven Contemporary Women Writers*. Beijing: Panda, 1982. (Introduction by: Gladys Yang; Stories by: Ru Zhijuan, Huang Zongying, Zong Pu, Shen Rong, Zhang Jie, Zhang Kang Kang, and Wang Anyi)

A selection of stories by seven contemporary Chinese women writers who present a good cross section of life in China and who write mainly about the latter part of the seventies. Each story is set with the backdrop of the Cultural Revolution which disrupted so many Chinese lives.

## SELECTED READINGS FROM A SOCIOLOGICAL VIEWPOINT

Andors, Phyllis. *The Unfinished Liberation of Chinese Women*. 1949-1980. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.

A description of the women of China and their struggles, accomplishments and persistent problems over the past thirty years.

Ayscough, Florence. *Chinese Women: Yesterday and Today*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937.

Description of Chinese women incorporating folk songs, poetry and Chinese teachings. The author compares and contrasts such subjects as girlhood, marriage, education and professions from a viewpoint of the ancient past with the time of the author's writing. She points out remarkable women excelling in their various fields of interest, such as Pan Chao, the educator and Hau Mu-Lan, the warrior.

Belden, Jack. *China Shakes the World*. Introduction by Owen Lattimore. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970, (c1949).

An explanation of why Chiang Kai-shek declined in four years from undisputed ruler of China to a fugitive on the island of Formosa. A large section of the book, Part X, details the pain, anguish and despair of Chinese women during the Kuomintang party reign and how the Communist Party encouraged those feelings to incite a revolution.

Boggs, Lucienda. *Chinese Womanhood*. Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1913.

Discusses womanhood, motherhood, the position of the wife, and priestesses in China. Throughout the book the author cites various women and lives they led in ancient China. Slanted toward Christianity vs. Buddhism.

Broyelle, Claudie. *Women's Liberation in China*. With a Preface by Han Suejin, Translated from the French by Michele Cohen and Gary Herman. Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1977, (c1937).

A study of the Chinese emancipation of women based on the author's 1971 trip to China. Contains anecdotes and vivid life stories to illustrate the struggle of women in China in their search to transform society and themselves. The author has outlined orientations and trends in the liberation of Chinese women into five parts which treat the economic, domestic, material, familial and sexual aspects of women's oppression in the capitalist world and the progress made.

Croll, Elizabeth. *Chinese Women Since Mao*. London: Zed Books, Ltd. 1983.

Defines the role and status of women in China in the last thirty years and the changes that have taken place.

Croll, Elizabeth. *Feminism and Socialism in China*. New York: Schocken Books, 1980.

A study of the bond of feminism and socialism and the significance of each toward the redefinition of the role and status of women in twentieth century China. The author analyzes the influence of feminism on the Chinese village life, the work environment, home life and on the Communist Party. It is a description of the emancipation of Chinese women during the last century.

Croll, Elizabeth. *Women in Rural Development: The People's Republic of China*. Geneva: International Labour Office, 1977.

A research of the economic and social factors determining the conditions of life of rural women in China.

Croll, Elizabeth. *The Women's Movement in China: A Selection of Readings 1949-1973*. Nottingham: Russell Press Limited, 1974.

An anthology of readings on the structure, working methods, and goals of women's movement in China after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

Curtin, Katie. *Women In China*. New York: Pathfinder Press, 1974.

A sociological and historical overview of women in China.

Davin, Delia. *Women-work: Women and the Party Revolutionary China*. New York: Oxford, 1976.

A detailed description of the social changes that occurred in China, 1930-1950. The author studies the difficulties of introducing a new style of marriage to the conservative country. She describes Chinese women as they become involved in organizations, land reform and educational systems.

Endicott, Mary Austin. *Five Stars Over China: The Story of our Return to New China*. Toronto, Canada; published by the author, 1953.

Observations of a missionary's wife on returning to China in 1952 after five years absence. The author gathered her information through interviews with businessmen, government leaders, Christians, peasants, trade unionists and teachers. She discusses the contrast of the new China to the old China. She describes the health services, the clean-up campaign and land reform and how those changes affect the peasants and their way of life. The influence of the new China is also looked at from a capitalistic perspective. Education, love, marriage and family are other topics compared and contrasted in pre- and post revolution days. Endicott also tells the story of Green Jade, a young girl, and the changes the revolution made in her life.

Johnson, Kay Ann. *Women, The Family and Peasant Revolution in China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

A study that examines the policies and changes concerning women that have developed in the countryside under Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership during the revolutionary and post revolutionary periods. The primary focus is on reform of marriage and the family. Both have defined and shaped women's place in Chinese society more than any other single set of factors. The prerevolutionary setting is discussed followed by breakdown of the years 1921-49, 1950-53, and 1955-80, and women's position during each of these time spans.

Kristera, Julia. *About Chinese Women*. translated from the French by Anita Barrows Dutton, 1977.

A study of the historical background and current status of women in China.

McNabb, R.L. *Women of the Middle Kingdom*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Jennings and Pye, 1903.

A description of the condition of women of China in 1800s. Many of their customs, both social and religious are explained. The author, formerly a missionary in China, discusses the trials of childhood and youth (infanticide), women's status in the home and society, prearranged marriages, and the houses in which Chinese women live.

Sidel, Ruth. *Women and Child Care in China*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1972.

The author, a psychiatric social worker, concentrates on the role of women, the care of children, and medicine in China and compares life in China in the 60s and 70s with that of the "bitter past" prior to the revolution in 1949. She describes China as a poor country without beggars, where the necessities but few conveniences are provided. The author studies the equality for women in China, the care of Chinese children and the communication of a system of values from one generation to another.



Sidel, Ruth. *Women and Child Care in China: A First Hand Report*. Revised edition. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1982.

A revised issue of the 1972 work of a sociological study of *Child Care in China*. The author also discusses the dramatic changes that have occurred in the revulsion against the Cultural Revolution.

Siu, Bobby. *Women of China: Imperialism and Women's Resistance, 1900-49*. Totowa, New Jersey: Biblio Distribution Center, 1982.

A study of the women's movement in China from 1900-1949.

Snow, Helen Foster. *Women in Modern China*. The Hague: Moulton and Co., 1967.

A study of the sociological status of women in China and their emancipation. Covers from the T'ai-p'ing to the 1911 Revolution and from the May 4th Movement in 1919 to the Communes. Discusses marriage, divorce and property rights, of women. Gives biographical sketches of such women as Madam Feng Yu-hsiang, the Soong Daughters, Madam Sun Yat-sen and Madam Chiang Kai-shek.

Smedley, Agnes, *Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution*. edited with an introduction by Jan McKinnon and Steve MacKinnon with an afterward by Florence Howe. Old Westbury, New York: Feminist Press, 1976.

Sketches of the struggles of eighteen women in the context of the social and political movements from 1929 to 1940 in China. A good study of the Chinese Revolution from the Chinese women's point of view.

Stacey, Judith. *Patriarchy and Socialist Revolution in China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

This book is primarily about the family and revolution in China. The author states that despite significant progress Chinese women have made over their prerevolutionary status, Chinese women still endure educational, economic, political and cultural inequities. She discusses the basic principles of the traditional Confucian social and family structure; the social revolutionary crisis in China as a family crisis; and origins and development of the People's War and how this changed the family. The author points out that China's women have seen little change in the liberation of women in Post-Mao China.

Wolf, Margery. *Women and The Family in Rural Taiwan*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1972.

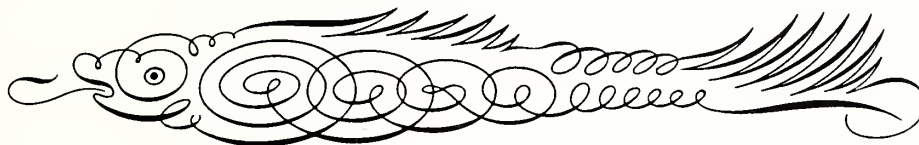
In this study of Taiwanese country women, the author follows their life cycle. From interviews of numerous people the author collected in the '50s and '60s, she explains the training of Taiwanese children, educational practices and compares love marriages to arranged marriages. The author endeavors to present the realities of the women of Taiwan from an anthropological viewpoint.

Yao, Esther S. Lee. *Chinese Women: Past and Present*. Mesquite, Texas: Ide House, 1983.

A historical study of Chinese Women spanning 208 B.C. to modern times.

Yueh-Hwa, Lin. *The Golden Wiong: A Sociological Study of Chinese Families*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1974, 1947.

A sociological study written in the form of a novel. It is an analysis of two families, the house of Hwang and the house of Chiang, living side by side in a Fu Kien village and related by kinship and business interests. One family continues to prosper through adversity while the other first flourishes and then declines. A study of Chinese family life rigidly restrained from personal exuberance by rules of politeness, filial obedience, respect for old age, and other social and ritual conventions.



## TWO WOMEN OF CHINA



Hualing Nieh

Hualing Nieh  
New World Press, Beijing, China

by Carolyn Carmichael

Hualing Nieh, the author of *Two Women of China*, was herself born in China, took a degree in Foreign Literature at National Central University in Nanking, was for eleven years editor of *Free China Fortnightly* in Taiwan until it was closed down by the Kuomintang government, after which she taught Creative Writing and Modern Literature at Taiwan University. In 1964 she went as visiting artist to The Writer's Workshop at the University of Iowa where she earned a Master of Fine Arts degree. With Paul Engle she started the International Writing Program at the University and in 1971 she was married to him. At the time of publication of this book (1981) she was Professor of Letters at Iowa, had published thirteen books in ten countries, seven of them including this one in both Chinese and English in mainland China. I wish she would write her autobiography.

In total contrast, the protagonist of this novel (one woman, really) has become at the opening of the story a schizophrenic wandering the roads of America, Kerouac style, hitch-hiking, promiscuously taking up with anyone who offers a ride or shelter. She is in flight from an immigration officer who questions her qualifications for permanent residency. The structure of the book is odd, consisting of four sections each introduced by a letter to the immigration officer from "Peach," as she now calls herself, describing her wanderings and larger "diaries" by her former self "Mulberry." (These names are unhappy translations of the Chinese "Shang-Ching" and

"Tao-Hung" said by the author to be both beautiful and symbolic in that language). The diaries are discontinuous, separated in time and place. In the first the girl Mulberry is running away from home with another girl in an adolescent kind of lesbian attachment trying to get to Chungking during the Japanese invasion. This is a quite enthralling story of the small boat they were on being caught for six days between rocks in the Yangtze River rapids. Other boats full of fleeing people are capsized, people drown, Japanese planes fly overhead. There is no hope except for rain to raise the water level so the boat could float free. In their peril the few passengers become intensely involved with each other.

The diary episode of the second section takes place in Peiping four years later as that city is being besieged by the Nationalists from without and disrupted by the Maoists from within. Mulberry has fled here to take refuge with an old aunt and her stepson. Everything of the old order is collapsing about them, most of their house is occupied by noisy students, The Forbidden City is vandalized, the poor old lady dies and has to be ignominiously buried in a swamp, but not before maneuvering Mulberry into marrying her dubious stepson. Mulberry and her husband, seemingly without politics in the matter, flee the fallen city hoping to find safety in the south.

Third episode: eight years later they are in Taiwan hiding in a cramped attic with their small daughter because the husband is sought by the police for embezzlement. They are in hiding for two wretched years in this place deteriorating physically and mentally, the man ill and rather contemptible, the child learning to hate, the woman beginning to escape with night time forays outside—the inception of the "Peach" personality. In the fourth episode Mulberry-Peach now forty-one is in America and we watch the adventurously abandoned personality of Peach taking over, eventually declaring Mulberry "dead." She is in contact with variously acclimated Chinese who, presumably, represent a kind of cultural schizophrenia in the ways they suppress their heritage and take on the patterns of new lives. For Peach everything in the life of Mulberry has been a sequence of destruction: "flight, the threat, the trap and alienation" in the author's words. And now Peach is on a self-destructive course. We are never really privy to her thinking and feeling. Her behavior seems purely reactive—self-preservation by flight—but, one wonders, is this self an adequate carrier of

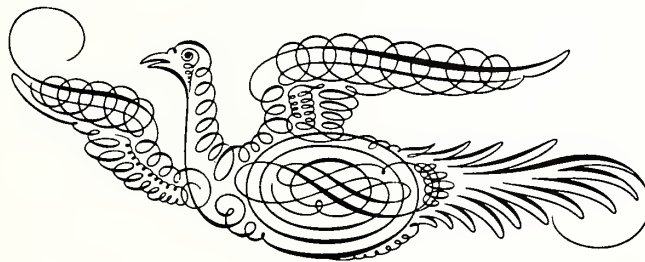


the symbolic load of the novel?

It is possible that the book is meant primarily for Chinese readers who could, from their own knowledge and experience, fill in background, and who could resonate to the snatches of folk tales and rumors such as that of a people-eating ghost. For me the book could be twice as long, with less contrivance and more insight into character. What really impelled a sixteen year old girl to run away from a fairly comfortable home in the China of the 40's? This first flight was not evidently an act of desperation and one would like to know what it was. Escape from the perceived fate of women in China? The claustrophobic life in the attic in Taiwan, where there was not room to stand up, is surely meant as metaphor for the conditions there under the Kuomintang, but the feckless character of the husband is the immediate cause of their trouble. He would have embezzled anywhere but might have survived under the old order in Peiping with his family connections. Mulberry's life as written is emblematic of a tortured period of history but does not much illuminate our understanding of it because there is so little consciousness evident in the characters. No doubt they are victims of fate but the mindlessness of their fatedness puts the novel at cross purposes so it becomes a "Perils of Pauline" adventure

story on a vast tragically lit stage. Perhaps this is unjust. They are, after all examples of the millions who are tossed about by events over which they have no control and of which they have no understanding. I am reminded of old soldiers I saw in a veteran's hospital in Taiwan, profoundly depressed, completely cut off from what was home, not even knowing whether their families were alive or dead, and certainly innocent of any ideology.

It may be irrelevant to try to assess the literary merit of this novel except to mutter that the subject demands something on the scale of *War and Peace*. The language is American in tone, complete with sex, slang and occasional epithet so the characters are removed from the category "exotic" and therefore accessible, ordinary, for us. How exotic must the story seem to the reader in China with its maps of the western states where Peach wanders, its telling at some length the Donner Pass story of starvation, death, cannibalism, and survival? Perhaps this makes us more accessible. Nevertheless this may not need to be a great concern—the gap between the ancient resilient culture of China and the West is much less than that between the West and any other Asiatic civilization. After all, we are both grounded in humanism however deviating our histories have been.



## THE CHINA EXPERIENCE - TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Previous accounts of memorable excursions—climbing the Adirondacks, sailing the Greek isles—have been recorded here, with special attention to women's perceptions of wilderness whether on land or sea. This trip is different. Not just because of the ancient lure of "mysterious Cathay," the land of silks and spices, porcelains and cuisine, wisdom and strange customs; but because China has had for Western women another dimension, asking us how to understand the role of women in a Confucian culture that relegated them to servant/slave status, breaking their very feet in an often losing attempt to cripple them psychologically as well as physically, while at the same time radiant poets like Li Ching Chao and the Lady Wen Jie, legendary warrior women like Hua Mu Lan, and real revolutionary heroines like Qiu Jin filled the consciousness of little girls and boys alike as they absorbed the heroic traditions of their nation.

When Susan Dietrich, an experienced China tour organizer, and Anthony Wei, professor of philosophy born in Beijing, announced their Study Tour, I knew I had to go. Their special knowledge and experience promised an unusual opportunity. The Christmas-card circuit recruited friends to join us: Joan Lewis, long time staff member of TCW, came along; Carol Hunter, whose article on her therapy technique will appear in our next issue; and Helene Guttman, science advisor to TCW, who solicited Dr. Chen's article. Joining other professional friends and colleagues, off we went. We had entre' to many experiences that are not usually available to tourists. Xie Jin, film director, whom I had met in Chicago before the trip, sent me to Tan Fuyun of the Shanghai Federation of Women, who led me to the All-China Women's Federation, where with the help of Yu Ying, tour guide from Hangzhou, we were brought (Joan, Helene, Ying and I) to the editorial offices of *Women of China* and to an interview with Editor Li Zhongxiu. Without the help of many people, here gratefully acknowledged, we could not have met these leaders of the women's movement.

There we discussed, through an exceptionally able translator who gave simultaneous translations, our mutual interests, questions and concerns. Were we "feminist" in orientation? our questioner wondered. We put forward our position. She replied that *Women of China* also preferred not to waste energy on fighting men but on finding ways toward mutual achievement

of shared goals. Madame Li Zhongxiu greeted us with warmth, intelligence and generosity.

There is no space here to cover the twenty-four day tour; so let a few impressions telescope what I want to say: Confucius is alive and well in modern China. His teachings of benevolence, filial piety, obedience, the codification of behavior, all in a hierarchical social order, have survived. The "Five Good Family," for example, defines the expected virtues of the family as (1) work hard, be diligent; (2) respect the old and look after the young; (3) educate the children; (4) be good neighbors; and (5) practice family planning. Only the last would not have been included in Confucius' commands. We also saw some cases where individuals seemed to be placed in jobs inappropriately, where it appeared they might have been happier and more effective in another niche, but the authorities insisted that they would work with and continue to train them until they learned to do it well. This led us to wonder where is the individual in a system where the needs of the state are paramount? Is the concept of the "individual" one that is equated only with selfishness and greed? Or is the state best served by the appropriate and free utilization of the talents of all its citizens? Here again, we were reminded of the Confucian values that always stressed the subordination of the individual to the state.

In a brief visit, one cannot penetrate deeply into a country which is going through radical changes whose consequences no one can foresee, including probably the Chinese people themselves. In any culture, the persistence of traditional attitudes must give pause to those who aspire to be agents of change. China has still a labor-intensive economy, co-existing with high-rise and high-tech modernization—a tremendous task. However, there is no doubt left in the mind of the traveler as to the vigor, the resilience, and the richness of character of the women of China.

Returning home, a newly stimulated desire to keep up to date with the unfolding of events in China today, led us to an item in the Chinese-language newspaper published in New York, *Centre Daily News* (November 26, 1985) on "Reforms, Open Door Policy and Women." The article described the first symposium sponsored by the Society for Women's Studies of Guangdong. Fifty-three papers were read at this ground-breaking event, leading to conclusions that women must overcome a sense of inferiority before they can achieve equality, must develop self-confidence, self-esteem and self-reliance, must



act positively to prove that men and women are equal in many ways and must have public support and the favorable opinion of society in order to attain these goals. Thus, women's studies has become a new subject in China, "to systematically study the roles of women in society."

### Neve Shalom-Oasis of Peace

*The Creative Woman* recently sponsored, in cooperation with the Division of Psychology and Counseling, the Women's Resource Center, and the American Friends of Neve Shalom, a presentation by Ariela Bailey, a Jew, and Eyas Shbeta, an Arab, both of Israel, on their cooperative village in Israel where Arabs and Jews have chosen to live together in intercultural harmony. Independent of the State of Israel, with no government sanction or financial support, they conduct workshops on conflict resolution and have brought more than seven thousand teenagers and adults through their program, dedicated to the idea that peace can come only from a sharing of experiences, needs, pains and expectations in a climate of mutual respect and acceptance. We were proud to help sponsor a program on this extraordinary effort.

### We get mail

In one day's mail, a remarkable haul: seven subscriptions from libraries, including Ewha Women's University in Seoul, South Korea; Lisse, Holland; an article by Mahhuri Sheth from Bombay and Eveline Lang's doctoral abstract from Athens, Ohio. We have had an international flavor and perspective from the start and friends abroad have written to us from



Eyas Shbeta and Ariela Bailey

time to time. To witness the growing, if small, visibility of TCW in some of the most unsuspected quarters is one of the delights of this office.

HEH

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